

# Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

## Bible Study – February 4, 2021

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Title: “The Difference Between Remorse, Guilt, Regret, and Repentance”

Scripture Reference: Matthew 27:3-5

“Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.”

### I. Introduction

A. I would like for us during this study to explore this vitally important subject of repentance. It may be that many people don't really understand what true repentance is or why it is so foundational and necessary to the Christian walk.

B. My prayer is that this lesson will provide you with a clear understanding of what repentance is and with that in mind, I want to share with you a story. The story concerns a young boy growing up in church ((and no, it's not me, although I did grow up in church)), and in growing up in church, what this little boy witnessed made a tremendous impact on his life. In fact, it helped him to understand the vast difference between two words: **remorse** and **true repentance**.

C. Here is the essence of the story. Each year there was an

C. Here is the essence of the story. Each year there was an annual revival meeting at this young boy's church. It was at one of these meetings that an evangelist preached about hell, and the

young boy became so convicted of his sin that he committed his life to Christ.

D. However, not long after having walked down the aisle to receive Christ as his Savior, he began to have serious doubt about whether he had really been saved.

E. This doubt was brought about as a result of him watching what happened when others got saved, which was entirely different from his own personal experience.

F. Here is what the young boy observed – Adults often wept and wept when they bowed at the altar, but the young boy didn't shed a tear the day he got saved.

G. Preying on his insecurity and fears, the devil began to torment the boy every day with thoughts such as:

- ☒ Why didn't you cry when you came forward to give your heart to Christ?
- ☒ Maybe you're not really saved!
- ☒ If you were really sincere, shouldn't you have cried like all the others did when they repented and got saved.

H. As time passed, the young boy began to notice a very important trend. Frequently, the people who cried buckets of tears at the altar, were the same people who came forward during the altar call each year during revival.

I. As the young boy observed these people, he began to realize

that year-after-year, after they repented, they walked out the back door of the church, and many of them didn't show their faces in church until the next year's revival meeting.

J. This pattern continued and these people ended up back on their knees at the altar – crying buckets of tears and sobbing profusely. Finally, it dawned on the young boy what was happening!

K. Many of those who cried profusely never changed. He also realized that a show of emotion is not always a sign of repentance; sometimes it is only evidence of **remorse**.

## II. Exposition [Part I]

- A. Repentance produces **change**, whereas remorse produces sorrow, which is often confused with repentance. However, there is an enormous difference between repentance and remorse.
- B. A perfect New Testament example of remorse is found in the Gospel of Matthew 27:3-5, that tells us about Judas Iscariot. It says – “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou do that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.”
- C. Notice the Bible says that Judas “repented” himself. Usually, a person who repents does not go out and hang himself afterwards; so, what really happened in this verse?
- D. As Judas watched Jesus being carried away to Pilate, the full enormity of his treachery finally began to set in on him, as he realized the Jewish leaders indeed intended to put Jesus to death.
- E. The sight was devastating to Judas, more than even his money-hungry mind, his sordid soul, and his seared conscience could deal with.
- F. The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible uses the word “**repented**” in Matthew 27:3, but this is not the word most often used, meaning to repent in the New Testament. The Greek word for repent is **Metanoeo**. Instead, the word used in this verse is **Metamelomai**, indicating that Judas **felt remorse**.
- G. Judas felt remorse as he began to experience the intense, excruciating pain that is unique to profound guilt.
- H. The word **Metamelomai** is used five times in the New Testament, and in each instance, it expresses sorrow, mourning, or grief. Consider the following:
1. Metamelomai can depict remorse that grips a person

because of an act he or she committed that they know is wrong.

- a. If this person were willing to repent (**Metanoeo**), they could change and be forgiven. But because this person has no plans to repent, or stop their sinful activities, he or she is therefore gripped with remorse. Consequently, this produces **no change** in a person's life.

2. **Metamelomai** can also express the guilt a person feels

because they have done wrong, will continue to do wrong, and they have no plans to change their course of action.

- a. This person feels shameful about what they are doing but continues to do it anyway, which results in a state of on-going guilt.
- b. This guilt produces NO change in a person's life or behavior. Yet, genuine repentance would produce a change and acceptance of God's forgiveness would remove the guilt.

3. **Metamelomai** best describes the **regret** a person feels

because they were caught doing something wrong.

- a. This person is not repentant for committing the sin; instead, they are sorrowful only because they got caught.
- b. Rather than being repentant, this person is regretful that they got caught and must now pay the consequences.

**Comment:** Chances are that if this person had never been caught, they would have continued their activities.

### III.Exposition [Part II]

A. Because the term **Metamelomai** is used in Matthew 27:3, it

means that Judas Iscariot did **NOT** "repent" in the sense that he was sorry for what he did and wanted to make it right with God.

B. Rather, it confirms that he was remorseful, seized with guilt, and filled with regret.

c. Judas was more sorrowful for himself than he was for his

participation in Jesus' betrayal. His actions were **NOT** a demonstration of repentance that leads to salvation, but of sorrow, guilt, and a deep-seated remorse that ultimately led to death.

**This is precisely what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:10 about "the sorrow of the world that worketh death."**

#### **IV. Exposition [Part III]**

- A. Let us now reflect back for a moment to the story of the young boy and what he observed during the revival services.
- B. Emotions and tears may very well accompany repentance. If we have sinned against the Holy Spirit, it is normal to experience godly sorrow for our actions.
- C. In 2 Corinthians 7:10, Paul wrote about "**godly sorrow.**" Unlike the sorrow of the world that produces death, he wrote that, "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation."
- D. Godly sorrow produces more than tears; it produces a desire to change that leads us to deliverance, freedom, and salvation.

#### **V. Exposition [Part IV]**

- A. The young boy in the story was five years old when he got saved. He didn't have any tears to cry about his horrid sins at that young age.
- B. Even though he didn't cry, his decision to serve the Living Lord Jesus Christ was firm and therefore, absolutely real.
  - C. As a result of this experience, he learned not to confuse sobbing with repentance, although tears and emotions may accompany repentance, upon an initial, genuine confession of sin.
- D. However, tears and sobbing are **NOT** requirements, nor are they necessarily evidence that repentance has occurred.

#### **VI. Exposition [Part V]**

- A. Now we return to the word "**repent**" and the Greek word is

**Metanoeo** and it refers to a complete turn in the way we think, live, and act.

B. **As it relates to Salvation, Metanoeo means a genuine**

**change of mind and will. It means to turn from sin and then turn to Christ.**

c. So, what is the difference between guilt, remorse, regret, and repentance?

☒ **Guilt** is a prison that will keep you perpetually bound and unchanged.

☒ **Remorse** enslaves you in sorrow that engulfs you emotionally and leaves you feeling sad, depressed, hopeless, and unchanged.

☒ **Regret** is self-pity that is focused more on your own personal loss than on the pain or loss you caused to others or to the heart of God, and it leaves you unchanged.

☒ **Repentance** is a quality decision to change – and where genuine repentance occurs in a person's heart and mind, you can be sure the Holy Spirit will release His power to effect change in that person's life and lead them to freedom.

## VII. Reflections

A. In light of what we have covered in this study, are there any

areas in your life in which you have felt guilty, remorseful, or regretful – but unchanged?

B. Could it be that you have never really made a firm decision to change, and that's why you have not had enduring victory in these areas of your life?

C. If you have confused tears with repentance, now you know

that you don't have to depend on your emotions to repent.

D. If God is dealing with you about something that needs to change in your life, you can repent right now, regardless of what you do or do not feel.

**God is waiting for you to make a decision!**

**It is once again interactive time. Please complete the Scripture passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. All passages were taken from the King James Version of the Bible.**

"Have \_\_\_\_\_ upon me, O God, according to thy \_\_\_\_\_: according unto the \_\_\_\_\_ of thy tender mercies "

\_\_\_\_\_ my transgressions. \_\_\_\_\_ me thoroughly from mine \_\_\_\_\_, and cleanse me from my \_\_\_\_\_."

**[Psalm 51:1-2]**

“\_\_\_\_\_ in me a \_\_\_\_\_ heart, O God; and \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ spirit \_\_\_\_\_ me.” [Psalm 51:10]

“If my \_\_\_\_\_, which are called by my \_\_\_\_\_, shall \_\_\_\_\_ themselves, and \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ from their \_\_\_\_\_ ways; \_\_\_\_\_ will I hear from heaven, and will \_\_\_\_\_ their sin, and will \_\_\_\_\_ their land.”

[2 Chronicles 7:14]

“That if thou shalt \_\_\_\_\_ with thou \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus, and shalt \_\_\_\_\_ in be thine \_\_\_\_\_ that God hath \_\_\_\_\_ him from the dead, thou shalt be \_\_\_\_\_.”

For with the \_\_\_\_\_ man \_\_\_\_\_ unto \_\_\_\_\_; and with the mouth \_\_\_\_\_ is made unto \_\_\_\_\_.”

[Romans 10:9-10]

### QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

1. **Can you think of a time when you were so immersed in sorrow and remorse about something you had done, that you were unable to really repent?**
  - a. **How did your emotions get in the way of your repentance?**
2. **When you think back on your life to times when the Holy Spirit required you to repent about some attitude, action, or habit in your life, was your repentance genuine and are you living victoriously in those areas?**
  - a. **If you are still struggling after genuine repentance, have you embraced God's truth found in John 15:5c?**

**“for without me ye can do nothing.”**

**Thank you for your willingness to take part in this study session and I pray that you have been blessed.**

**Jude 3**

**Pastor Austin**