

Life Group Notes 10/20/2024

Pastor Mark Warren Grounded Week 5 Repentance

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 10/20. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On repentance.](#)
2. [On sin.](#)
3. [On "covenant eyes."](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

During worship, Richie talked about "selective hearing."

1. Do you remember?
2. Do you sometimes not hear someone when they talk to you?

Pastor Mark reviewed Victoria's message from last week, Grounded in Missions. We're "...on mission to reconcile ourselves to one another, and we are to represent God's heart with a spirit of reconciliation."

1. Do you have a testimony from this week?
2. Were you more aware of your own calling? Explain.
3. How did you do against bitterness, anger etc.?
4. Did you see anything broken that you can make a strategy to repair?
5. He reviewed the first four weeks of this series: Grounded in God's Word. Grounded in the Holy Spirit. Grounded in prayer. Grounded in missions. What have you discovered in this series?

Pastor says, "Repentance is an active part of our faith in our relationship with Jesus in that it is an active response to God's love for us." He says, "Repentance is awkward for us, because repentance is tied to sin. Repentance is directly connected to our ability to be close to God."

1. Explain.

2. Look at what Isaiah says in chapter 1: *15*When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you multiply your prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. *16*Wash and cleanse yourselves. Remove your evil deeds from My sight. Stop doing evil! *17*Learn to do right; seek justice and correct the oppressor. Defend the fatherless and plead the case of the widow.” How is the relationship that God describes here?
3. What has hindered that relationship.
4. What are the two steps God outlines that are needed to restore the relationship? How does one “learn to do right?”
5. What are the benefits of a relationship restored.
6. Look up Isaiah 59: *1*Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. *2*But your iniquities have built barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear. *3*For your hands are stained with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters injustice. What do you see?
7. Has God become deaf? Why does He not hear? Who built the soundproof barrier?
8. How did we build it? What of our actions does Isaiah list as wall builders here? How important are our own words in this?
9. How do we break down the barrier we have built?
10. Pastor says, “Repentance is a gift to us...it’s not a ‘You’ve got to’...It’s a ‘You get to.’” How does this work?
11. Review Romans 2: *2*And we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. *3*So when you, O man, pass judgment on others, yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? *4*Or do you disregard the riches of His kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you to repentance? Explain how His leading is actually a gift to us. How does it work?
12. Which comes first? His kindness or our repentance?
13. Do you have a testimony of His kindness toward you? What was the result?
Pastor says, “In doing research he discovered that over sixty percent of Christians, men and women, are entangled in some form of pornography.”
 1. Was this news?
 2. Take a minute to pray. Pray that the producers lose the ability and the tech to produce.
 3. Pray for the victims who are being forced into the industry. Pray for the trafficked, that they find freedom, and that all memories be healed.
 4. Pray for those addicted, that they find an abode in Christ’s Word, and be made free indeed.
 5. What other prevalent sins impact relationships today? What are our excuses for continuing in sin?
 6. If everyone in our culture is doing it, what should our response be?
7. Look up John 8: *31*So He said to the Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples. *32*Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*33*“We are Abraham’s descendants,” they answered. “We have never been slaves to anyone. How can You say we will be set free?” *34*Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. *35*A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son belongs to it forever. *36*So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. What do you see?

8. Who is arguing with Jesus?
9. Why do the "Jews who believed in Him," argue with him? Do you have a testimony?
10. How free is free? What do you have to look forward to? Why is it not enough to just be a "...Jew who believes?"
11. Explain again how repentance is a gift.
12. Pastor says, "Our hearts become seared and insensitive." What does the Bible say about hardness of heart?
13. How did God use a hardened heart with Pharaoh and the Egyptians?
14. Pastor says, "A hardened heart prevents us from hearing that 'still, small, voice.' It prevents us from hearing what God has for us." Explain.
15. Look up Deuteronomy 30:[5](#)*And the LORD your God will bring you into the land your fathers possessed, and you will take possession of it. He will cause you to prosper and multiply more than your fathers. [6](#)The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, and you will love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. [7](#)Then the LORD your God will put all these curses upon your enemies who hate you and persecute you.* What does repentance involve?
16. Who does the circumcision? How is this a gift?
17. How does the goodness of God function to do this in this passage?
18. According to this, when our hearts are circumcised, who benefits?
19. What relationships are restored?
20. Pastor says, "When our hearts are hardened, we lose conviction. Conviction is a gift as well, because conviction brings us to the place of recognizing sin, to say, 'No, that's wrong.'" Explain.

Pastor talks about the progression of sin. "We see it happening, and we participate. Then we progress to forming a habit. Then we forget that it's wrong because it's become a part of our life." Review how James describes this in his letter, chapter 1:[14](#)*But each one is tempted when by his own evil desires he is lured away and enticed. [15](#)Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. [16](#)Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. [17](#)Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, with whom there is no change or shifting shadow. [18](#)He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we would be a kind of firstfruits of His creation.*

1. Have you seen this? Fought it?
2. What is the solution?
3. What have you done to change your own desires?

Pastor summarizes, "Repentance doesn't only restore our relationship to the father and our relationship with one another. Repentance makes us active in hearing the voice of God to know what season we are in."

1. Explain.
2. What is happening?
3. Whom have you heard to say, "Be aware. Be on guard."?
4. Is only one side saying it? Or both sides? How do you know where to take heed?

Pastor took us to a very famous Old Testament passage on repentance. Look up 2 Chronicles 7:[12](#)*the LORD appeared to him at night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. [13](#)If I close the sky so there is*

no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send a plague among My people, [14](#)and if My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land. [15](#)Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.

1. Take a moment to read it again.
2. What do you see? What came *before* this response was spoken? How effective was Solomon's prayer?
3. What happens *before* God hears from heaven and forgives?
4. What prompted the people to humble themselves?
5. What are the steps in repentance that the people took? List them.
6. What are the steps in God's response? List them.
7. Look at verse 15: When did God begin to listen for His people to pray?
8. How do you know He is listening to you? Where is the temple today?

Pastor says, "We're going to look at this 'actual' turning. It is not *only* turning away from the sin. It is also turning toward God."

1. Explain. Pastor says, "It's more than just saying, 'I did it again. I'm so sorry.'" Why?
2. Pastor says, "Turning away from sin AND toward the Father will help you walk in freedom." Look again at the promises from John 8 above. How did Jesus tell us to do this? How does abiding in the Word help us hear from the Father?
3. In Chronicles above, which comes first, seeking God's face or turning from our wicked ways? Does that make a difference?
4. What do you think? Which is more potent and lasting, repentance due to fear? ...or repentance due to God's goodness?
5. Look at Psalm 119:[104](#)*I gain understanding from Your precepts; therefore I hate every false way.* [105](#)*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* [106](#)*I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments.* How does the Word Himself become a floodlight to our feet and light on our path? How does abiding in the Word help us hear from the Father? How prevalent is this theme in the Bible? ...at GCC?
6. Compare David's intention to what Proverbs says in chapter 4:[18](#)*The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining brighter and brighter until midday.* [19](#)*But the way of the wicked is like the darkest gloom; they do not know what makes them stumble.* Where is repentance on "...the path of the righteous?"
7. Look at Isaiah 55:[7](#)*Let the wicked man forsake his own way and the unrighteous man his own thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.* [8](#)*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,"* What is the order here? Which comes first, the return or the forsaking?
8. What are the steps to repentance here?
9. What are the benefits God promises? Are there any limits?

Recalling John the Baptizer's call, "Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,"? Pastor says, "John doesn't define what repentance is, but it's understood: Repentance involves acknowledging our wrongdoing as sin, and then turning from that and moving toward the Father in Heaven." In Mark 1, Jesus echoed John when He began His ministry saying, "The time has come. The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news."

1. What do you see?
2. Does John or Jesus outline any specific steps? Where are the steps found?
3. What does the kingdom bring with it in terms of behavior?
4. How does this fit into the reconciliation God desires?
5. How does the picture Jesus paints of the prodigal son fit into this ministry of reconciliation?
6. Talk about that son's change of heart. How do we know it was a complete change of mind? What did the son do to prove his determination was genuine?
7. Mark says, "It's not just turning from...it's running toward God." What was the prodigal son's expectation? What did he receive, more or less than expected?
8. What is your own expectation? Do you have a testimony?
9. Mark reiterated, "Repentance is a gift from God. It's a pathway toward mercy." Do you see this better now? Explain.
10. Mark says, looking again at Romans 2 above, "God is wooing us back." Explain. What is involved in "wooing?" Is God courting us? Explain.
11. Who is the bride?
12. In Psalm 23:6 David says, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life." The verb he uses is the Hebrew word *רָדַף*, *rawdaf*. It means to pursue, chase after, to persecute, to follow after. Imagine being "persecuted" by goodness and mercy all the days of your life, and say how this fits perfectly into this message on the **gift** of repentance.

Pastor repeats, "Sin will always hurt our relationship with the Father and with each other." Discuss what John says in 1 John 1: *6* If we say we have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. *7* But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. *8* If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. *9* If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1. How does sin hurt our relationships with the Father and with each other?
2. How does walking in the light repair the relationships?
3. What are the steps John lists to walking in the light?
4. What does the cleansing? Explain.

Mark lists the six things to do in putting repentance into a continual practice. He says, "It is no longer acceptable to shrug and say, 'Everyone sins. Everyone is doing it.' If we continue, the consequences are devastating and if we do not turn toward Jesus our hearts are going to be seared, and we'll no longer be aware of what is going on in the world. We need the Holy Spirit to lead us. We need the still small voice."

- I. **Examine your heart regularly.** Look at David's prayer in Psalm 139: *23* Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. *24* See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the way everlasting. What do you see? Who does the assessment? Who has to rely on hearing the still, small voice? Have you prayed this? How does this prevent you from saying, "Everyone is doing this?" If you keep a journal, how does this help you discern patterns? How do daily moments of quiet reflection help discern the areas that need repentance?
- II. **Confess your sins honestly.** Pastor Mark suggests repeating the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive..." is not adequate. Explain. He says,

“Acknowledge our sins toward God, and include our sins toward others.” (See [footnote 2, on sin, below](#).) He says, “Be specific with your sins. Declare what you know you did that was ‘off target.’” In chapter five, James says, “**16** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power to prevail.*” What is included in reconciliation, and restored relationship? What seems to be a symptom of broken relationships? Explain. What have you heard of this in your own studies? Pastor Mark theorizes, “When we’ve wronged each other, we really need to confess to each other.” What do you think?

- III. **Turn away from sin with action.** There is something you need to do. It has to be action oriented. You must not merely acknowledge whatever the sin is, you must admit that there is something you must do to turn from it. Pastor says, “If your phone is leading you to stumble, I would ask you to do something drastic with that. I know for me I have Covenant Eyes on my phone that I share with my family. (See link in the [footnote below](#).) You have to cut off those sources of temptation. Explain what Jesus says here: Mt. 5:29 *“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”* How serious is this principle? What is at stake? Mark says, “You have to replace old habits with good ones. You do not only chop it out, but you replace it with a healthy habit.” Look at Ephesians 4:21 *Surely you heard of Him and were taught in Him—in keeping with the truth that is in Jesus— 22to put off your former way of life, your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23to be renewed in the spirit of your minds; 24and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.* What do you see here? How important is this principle in Paul’s doctrine? What is the benefit? What will people see? What is “true” righteousness? As opposed to what, in fact?
- IV. **Seek accountability in community.** We realize at GCC that isolation is the playground of the enemy. This cannot be done alone. Sin is like a weed. Sin will grow if you do nothing about it. Find a life group and become a part of that group. Do you have a testimony?
- V. **Embrace God’s grace and forgiveness.** Look again at 1 John 1 above. *9If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Look at the steps. How much unrighteousness is cleansed? If God’s goodness leads to repentance, what are you envisioning? What did the prodigal son remember? Look at what David sings in Psalm 42: **3***My tears have been my food both day and night, while men ask me all day long, “Where is your God?”* **4***These things come to mind as I pour out my soul: how I walked with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God with shouts of joy and praise.* **5***Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why the unease within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him for the salvation of His presence.* What steps do you see? List them. What is David embracing?
- VI. **Continue to grow in your relationship with the Lord.** Make a list of the steps from the last weeks of this series. How is growth achieved? What is the first step? Look at God’s offer through Isaiah 1: **17***Learn to do right; seek justice and correct the oppressor. Defend the fatherless and plead the case of the widow.”*

18“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are as red as crimson, they will become like wool.”19If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best of the land.
20But if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” In your own words, what is God’s offer? How does one “learn to do right.” To what degree has the sinner sinned? What practical steps to repentance does Isaiah lay out? What are the benefits of seeking? What happens to the sin? Compare to what John said above? Where does worship, praise and prayer enter into this step?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Go over the six steps to repentance. Review each.
3. Choose at least one. Take the steps necessary, and make the notes Mark suggests.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe’s Notes:

1. **On repentance**—The Greek verb for repentance is μετανοέω, *metanoeo*. It means to change one's mind or purpose. It combines the preposition *meta*, changed after being with, and *noeo* which means to think. Hence, "think differently *after*," "after a complete change of *mind*." The main emphasis is on the permanently altered state of one’s mind. When pastor says, “This is not just done once, it's ongoing...,” that continued determination is directly from the meaning of the Greek word.
2. **On sin**—It’s good to remember the Greek word for “sin,” ἁμαρτία, *hamartia*, implies missing the mark. (“*a*” is the negative particle, and “*mero*,” the part or share.) It is a “sin, or forfeiture because missing the mark”). It involves the brand of sin that emphasizes its *self*-originated (*self*-empowered) nature – i.e. it is not originated or empowered by God through faith. It is therefore *anything less than* excellence. Remember Paul said in Romans 14:**23**[But the one who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that is not from faith is sin.](#) If an arrow off from the bullseye is, sin how important is it to seek always and only ever to be **on target** at all times? How have you set your goals? Where have you set it?
3. **On “Covenant Eyes”**—Covenant Eyes is a highly rated app that you can get for your phone and computer that helps address accountability specifically where porn and inappropriate browsing are concerned. Here is the link.
<https://www.covenanteyes.com/?msclkid=1afea41e79a81cdcbd42c30b48b>

[92d99&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Branded&utm_term=covenant%20eyes&utm_content=Branded](#)

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Isaiah 1:14-17
Tuesday: Isaiah 1:18-20
Wednesday: Isaiah 59:1-4
Thursday: Romans 2:2-4
Friday: Romans 5:6-8
Saturday: John 8:31-36
Sunday: Deuteronomy 30:5-7

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.