

October 7

Scriptures: Read 2 Corinthians 7

Key Verse: “For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” (2 Corinthians 7:10)

Overview

One day, while pastoring in Jerusalem, I was visited in my office by a young man with a stricken conscience. He had done something very wrong and, in our Sunday evening service that week, had become very convinced of the wrongness of his action. As he spoke to me, his face was etched with sorrow, his eyes brimmed with tears, and as we prayed his body shook with sobs. When he left he said, “Thank you, pastor, for praying with me about that sin. I wish I’d never done what I did, but I believe God has forgiven me. I’ll never do it again.” To my knowledge, he never did.

In Paul’s terms, the young man had experienced “godly sorrow”. Or, as some of my evangelical friends might put it, “conviction of sin”. Perhaps a psychologist might call it guilt. But what gave it value was its product: repentance. The young man turned away from his sin and never did it again. And, by the way, was much happier (or “healthier”) as a result. His repentance strengthened his life.

Contrast this to the person who does wrong, feels guilty, but does nothing about it. His conscience may be stricken, but he continues to sin. What happens? Eventually his action erodes his conscience. It chips away at that inner voice until that voice is silent. His conscience has become “seared”. Tenderness of heart gives way to scar tissue.

All of us have the potential to kill our conscience. No, we won’t do it with one shotgun blast, but we do it by degree, little by little, until our moral sense is dead. And, in Biblical terms, when our conscience dies, our spirit dies. If we refuse to listen, we are choosing spiritual death. We may have no regrets today, but there will come a day of great regret. So why not choose life today? Repent and live!

Prayer

Father God, we choose life. We determine to live in a repentant attitude. Please tenderize our consciences so that we will be 100% sensitized to those things that are wrong. Keep us true to our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.