

Module : The Foundation Doctrines of Christ

Session 3 : Repentance - Part 3

Focus : Restitution

A Reminder : Structure of this Study on the Doctrine of Repentance:



This session (3) deals with point (g) number 7, with an emphasis on restitution.

(g) ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF TRUE REPENTANCE

(Continued From Sessions 1 and 2)

7. OBSERVABLE, OUTWARD TRANSFORMATION, INCLUDING RESTITUTION, EVIDENCES TRUE REPENTANCE

RESTITUTION DEMONSTRATES TRUE REPENTANCE, AND ACTIVATES SIGNIFICANT DIVINE BLESSING IN YOUR LIFE

We concluded the last session with a focus on the fact that true repentance is evidenced by an outward transformation in one's behaviour for the good (see **Luke 3:8a** and **Acts 26: 19,20**). We also concluded that, in the final analysis, a change of attitude and mind that manifests in a change of action and lifestyle is the most compelling evidence that repentance has taken place. This

includes a forsaking of the sin or the wrong done. Further to this, however, biblical repentance also incorporates seeking to rectify any wrong done, within your capacity to do so.

Restitution is paying back or returning something unlawfully taken, or making right any wrong done. God forgives our sin, but we may still have to reap the natural consequences of sin. **God will give grace to deal with the results of our sinful deeds**, for which we have repented. Sometimes our repentance may require us to make restitution in helping to deal with the results of our sin.

God required restitution under the Old Covenant.

Exodus 22:1 If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep. [See Also Lev. 6:5; Num. 5:6-7]

In the New Testament, an example of restitution is found in **Luke 19:8**, where Zaccheus said, “Half of my goods I will give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I will restore to him fourfold”.

Restitution validates and authenticates the claim to have repented. Restitution is often referred to as “**THE OTHER ‘R’ of REPENTANCE**” and the “**MISSING INGREDIENT IN REPENTANCE**”. Restitution seeks to put the wrong right, **especially in the matter of sins against people**. Apologies and confessions to affected persons should be made. This aids the healing process in someone whom you might have intentionally or unintentionally hurt or offended. If you have sinned against someone in some respect, while you have asked God for forgiveness, you should also ask forgiveness from the person whom you hurt and who may (or not) be offended or alienated from you relationally.

A BROADER VIEW OF RESTITUTION

The actual word ‘restitution’ is used once in the New Testament in reference to **the restoration of created things back to their original God-determined state in Christ - both man and all created things, including Heaven and Earth.**

Acts 3:19-21 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that **your sins may be blotted out**, when the **times of refreshing** shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until **the times of restitution of all things**, which **God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.** (KJV)

Restitution = apokatástasis = A restitution of a thing to its former condition¹.

This word occurs only in Acts 3:21, where the restitution of all things is to be understood as the **day of judgement** and of the **consummation of the age** when the **Lord will return and restore all things**, spoken through the prophets, **back to God’s original design**. This will include the **immortality of sons of God** - everyone **completely embodying the image of God**, a **new Heaven and a new Earth**.

Now, this passage teaches that Heaven has received and will retain Jesus, until the restitution of all things.

Acts 3:21a Whom heaven must **receive [and retain]** until the **time for the complete restoration** of all that God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets for ages past

The purpose of this study is not to get into this passage above in any detail, but to simple draw out from it passage some principles, which we could prophetically or symbolically apply to the issue of restitutionary repentance.

- The Heavens will retain Jesus Christ until the restitution of all things. Principle: **Until restitution is enacted, Heaven cannot release the person or presence of Christ.**
- Times of restitution are natural times of **putting back to God's order what is out of order.** This then, as an indication of total repentance, **releases and activates greater expressions of God's manifest presence, with all of its powerful possibilities.** Times ('chronos' in the Greek) of repentful restitution (verse 21) will result in times ('kairos' in the Greek) of refreshing that come from God's presence (verse 19).
- Thus, when we enact restitution as evidence of true repentance, this is just but **a small part of an overall process of God restoring back all things to order and alignment to His eternal will and purpose.** Think of it like this: When you, in your small microcosm, make restitution for some wrong act or attitude for which you have repented, you are simply complying with an overall process of restoration and restitution of all things in Christ. This is the **broader picture.** **When what you do in smallness within your private world lines up with God's expectation and purposes on the broader macro scale, then what you do personally is further and hugely endowed by God with significant grace, because it blends into the overarch of His grand scheme of things for the entirety of creation.**

✓ **PERPETUAL TIMES OF REFRESHING AND DIVINE PROMISES AND PURPOSES SCECURED**

Hosea 10:12 Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; **Break up your fallow ground,** For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes **and rain righteousness** on you.

Fallow ground is hardened ground in our hearts representing **sin, specifically, rebellion and stubbornness.** Breaking up fallow or resistant ground is **not an easy process.** The implication is one of destroying a hardness or mindset that is **non-reactive to the rain of the Word of God.** Breaking up the fallow ground is an **imagery of repentance** and refers to God's pruning, which prepares us for greater fruitfulness. Breaking up the fallow ground is preparation for rains of righteousness.

God will prune and reprove you to break up the calloused condition of the heart, so that when His rain descends from heaven, the heart environment to able to receive and respond to that which

He gives. Repentance and transformation is key to fully realise the intended benefit of God's seasons of refreshing. The fact that rain descends does not guarantee a response from the earth in terms of yielding a harvest. Similarly, our hearts must be right to receive and fully embrace the flow of God's river in our midst.

Prov. 1:23 **"Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.**

Acts 3:19 **"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, SO THAT times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord**

Repentance - transformed minds, attitudes, actions and lifestyle - activate something in the realm of the spiritual and supernatural. Refreshing is released from Heaven. God's chastening leads to repentance, which leads to 'times' of refreshing that emit from God's presence.

In the Greek, 'Times' = **kairos** = opportune or appropriate time².
Times at which certain foreordained events take place.

A kairos time period is a significant season in which **certain preordained events within God's will must transpire or materialise**. Repentance is the preparation for and activation of these kairos moments in God. When God does perform what was always promised within a kairos moment, it has the effect of producing refreshment to His sons in that season. These are "times of refreshing". Kairos times are characterised by supernatural and grace-empowered accomplishments of significant aspects of God's will for our lives personally and/or His church corporately.

Wuest, a translator of the New Testament Greek, uses the phrase "**epoch-making periods**", in his attempt to fully capture the significance of the Greek term, 'kairos'.

Acts 3:19 Therefore **repent at once**, instantly changing your attitude, and perform a right-about-face in order that your sins may be obliterated, in order that there may come **EPOCH MAKING PERIODS of spiritual REVIVAL and REFRESHMENT** from the presence of the Lord. **(Wuest Expanded Translation of the New Testament)**

The phrase 'epoch-making' is interesting. The term means the following :

Epoch-making = Significant by virtue of ensuing historical developments³
 = Of major importance; likely to have a significant effect on a particular period of time⁴
 = A period of time characterised by momentous events or changes⁵.
 = A fixed point in time from which succeeding years are numbered⁶.

A time period is said to be epochal when particular events in it have a significant positive or beneficial impact or bearing on not only persons immediately associated with those events, but also an impact on future time periods. This time period becomes a point of reference, marking the commencement of a brand new era in people's lives. Repentance with restitution has this very effect. It activates not just great blessings in your life, but sets you off on a course of profound interventions and expressions of God's work in and through you, such that it changes the character of both the present and the ensuing time periods of your life.

Refreshing = **anapsuxis** =

From two words: (i) **ana** = repetition, intensity or reversal, increase
(ii) **psucho** = to breathe, blow or refresh with cool air

Recovery of breath, that is, (figuratively) revival⁷.

These times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord, who brings to pass certain foreordained events planned in Christ in eternity for our lives. Repentance, coupled with restitution, generate these times. God's presence implies God's purposes being fulfilled for us. Literally, as the Greek word for refreshing suggests, you start to 'BREATHE AGAIN'.

Note the sequential process captured in three words starting with the letter 'R', indicated in Acts 3:19, framed in the NASB version of the Bible:

Acts 3:19 Therefore **REPENT** and **RETURN**, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of **REFRESHING** may come from the presence of the Lord.

Repent → Return → Refreshing

Let us now examine a few Case Studies where Repentance with Restitution Resulted in 'TIMES OF REFRESHING'

- **THE ZACCHEUS ACCOUNT:**

Luke 19:1-10

- 1 He entered Jericho and was passing through.
- 2 And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a **chief tax collector** and he **was rich**.
- 3 Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was **small in stature**.
- 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a **sycamore tree** in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.
- 5 When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today **I must stay at your house.**"

- 6 And he hurried and came down and **received Him gladly.**
- 7 When they saw it, they all *began* to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."
- 8 Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, **half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.**"
- 9 And Jesus said to him, "**Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.**
- 10 "For the **Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.**"

The account of the conversion of Zaccheus is a powerful demonstration of the principle of restitution. **He RECEIVED JESUS with joy (see verse 3).** Whilst this reception of Jesus was 'INTO HIS HOUSE', spiritually or symbolically it indicates his reception of Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Jesus requested to **STAY** in Zaccheus' house. The Greek word used here is '**MENO**', meaning '**to remain, abide, dwell, live**'⁸. This implies Jesus wanted to **dwell or abide with a sense of permanence** within the life of Zaccheus, not literally, but spiritually within his heart.

The reference to 'house' symbolically could also have reference to a **household of faith** - a local church. The church at Laodicea kept Jesus out, for He said HE knocks at their door, waiting to be invited in. Read **Rev. 3:14-22**⁹. Jesus, from a heart of love, chides them for their luke-warmness, amongst other things, and required of them to '**repent**'.

Rev. 3:19 'Those **whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.**

He indicated He is standing at their 'door', door being symbolic of (1) a spiritual leader of the church¹⁰ or (2) your heart. His intent is to 'SUP' with us - this denotes intimacy of fellowship and relationship. The result would be an **overcoming disposition**.

Rev. 3:21a He who **overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne ...**

Jesus was invited into Zaccheus' house, who in essence received HIM into his heart and enjoyed a sense of intimacy and fellowship with HIM. But, it was only after Zaccheus' commitment to make restitution, giving half of his personal wealth to the poor, and paying back four times the amount he had robbed anyone, did Jesus say the following: "**TODAY SALVATION HAS COME TO YOUR HOUSE**" - verse 9. Zaccheus was in essence already saved, but salvation came to his house after a commitment to restitution. Zaccheus, by the act of restitution, opened up a new dimension to his entire household. His restitution brought to bear upon his entire sphere a significant deposit of grace.

Jesus then validated him as a son of Abraham and thus heir to all the Abrahamic promises. This is also proof that Zaccheus expressed genuine faith and belief in Jesus. The book of Galatians teaches that Christ Himself is the seed of Abraham, and so too all who believe in Christ by faith.

Gal. 3:16 Now the promises were spoken to **Abraham and to his seed**. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, **Christ**.

Gal. 3:7 Therefore, be sure that it is **those who are of faith** who are **sons of Abraham**.

Gal. 3:29 And if you **belong to Christ**, then you are **Abraham’s descendants**, heirs according to promise.

Whilst **positionally** he was a son of Abraham because of his faith and belief in Jesus Christ, now **practically** Zaccheus could start to appropriate this fully in terms of an overcoming life of blessedness in Christ, only after he administrated the matter of restitution. As a ‘son of Abraham’ he could now appropriate all the promises made to Abraham, e.g.:

Gen. 12:2,3 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

The Greek word for salvation used in Luke 19, is ‘soteria’, meaning ‘safety, deliverance, preservation from danger or destruction’¹¹. It is all encompassing, affecting spirit, soul and body. It covers spiritual and natural domains of life. Salvation entered Zaccheus, the person, when he came down the tree and gladly received Jesus, and then salvation entered the ‘house’ of Zaccheus in every possible way, after an act of restitution.

THE EFFECT OF RESTITUTION ON BOTH PERSONS

Restitution honours God completely in every respect. It is a truly noble gesture and Christ-like. Restitution **SPEAKS** - it communicates something. It reveals the heart. In particular, when restitution is made via an act or gift of some kind, this conveys something powerful beyond what words can communicate, especially when that act or gift is reflective of a heart of repentance in the one administering the restitution.

Prov. 18:16 A man’s **GIFT** makes **ROOM for him** And brings him before great men.

(a) ON THE ONE WHO MAKE RESTITUTION

God gives repentance to men. God’s goodness leads men to repentance. To repent demands humility and thus demonstrates Christ-likeness. While having received forgiveness and repentance from God, he who repents with restitution, to the one to whom restitution is made, now behaves in a spiritual manner that so much reflects God Himself. The one who makes restitution is filled with an empowerment of GRACE-ability, and realises that he/she can function obediently, doing something that would ordinarily be

difficult, but possible when facilitated by the enablement given by God's grace. This person becomes a showcase or embodiment of the power of the grace of God in action. It brings tremendous joy and peace to your soul as you make restitution.

(b) ON THE ONE TO WHOM RESTITUTION IS MADE

When restitution is made, the nature and likeness of God is put on display for the other to see. It has the effect of hugely encouraging the person, who witnesses the goodness, grace and power of God in the one making the restitution. Imagine making restitution in some respect to someone that does not know the Lord personally and has never surrendered their lives to Christ. Restitution will speak loudly to them concerning the possibility of an authentic and vital relationship with God, the Father, through His Son, Christ Jesus. Also, it sets a very powerful example of genuine repentance that will forever impact the one to whom restitution is made.

RESTITUTION THROUGH FINANCIAL OFFERINGS:

Zaccheus' restitution had to cost him something. There was money and goods involved. For Zaccheus, he had to do this because he did secure some of his wealth through defrauding others through false accusation.

One powerful way of restitution would be to offer a gift, either in kind/deed or financial. The entire spirit governing restitution is to demonstrate repentance. Be wise in doing this and allow the Spirit of the Lord to lead you as to what to do, when to do it, how to do it, what to say, etc. You will know in your heart what the right thing to do is.

Do not see restitution as 'paying for your sin'. Your restitution has the powerful effect of healing relationships between people, and even SHORTENING ANY KIND OF REAPING PROCESS associated with the sin committed, even though God has completely forgiven the person.

• **JACOB'S REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION**

(Read Gen. 28-35)

Jacob sent a restitutionary offering of gifts to his estranged brother, Esau. This demonstrates his heart of genuine sorrow for taking advantage of his brother's weakness and carnality when he defrauded him out of his birthright. This birthright was always to be Jacob's - as was prophesied when they were born that Esau would serve him - thus denoting God's regard of Jacob as firstborn in His eyes and thus rightful heir to the birthright blessing. Jacob did not have to manipulate Esau to secure this.

Jacob sought to attain what was Divinely his to have, through carnal or deceptive means. For this he had to repent and make restitution. Jacob deceived and defrauded Esau in his desire to get the

birthright blessing of firstborn. What he desired and pursued was noble; how he did was deplorable. He had the right purpose but employed the wrong principles to attain it. He pursued the right thing, but in the wrong way. Many people feel that they can pursue spiritual goals or ends by any means, even using means which may be displeasing God. The means do not justify the end. As much as God is concerned about the 'end', He is equally concerned about employing the right or righteous 'means' to get to that end. That you attain your spiritual goals is important to God, but far more important to HIM is how you attain them. You cannot use, abuse, hurt, manipulate, exploit and show contempt for people along the way in your pursuit of attaining some noble goal or outcome in God.

There are many people who have legitimate and significant Divine destiny and promise attendant with their lives, yet seek to pursue and express this from the weakness or deficiency of their fallen nature. We should not succumb to this carnal tendency. If you have, but with time you mature, you must seek to set right any wrong, especially to people. This **honours God and His people**. After Jacob reconciles with Esau, the purposes of God for his life and calling are significantly hastened and exponentialised. **Any hindrance that you perceive blocking up the path of progress of your destiny in Christ, that is relative to some unrepentant action in your past where you have offended people in the process, can be removed very quickly through genuine repentance accompanied by appropriate restitution.**

Here below is Jacob's repentance enacted, and the resultant reconciliation with Esau:

Gen. 33:3,4 But he himself passed on ahead of them and **bowed down** to the ground **seven times**, until he came near to his brother. **Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.**

Jacob's bowing down seven times conveys a picture of perfect humility - humble repentance.

Here below is the restitution accompanied by a gift:

Gen. 33:10,11 Jacob said, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then **take my present from my hand**, for I see **your face as one sees the face of God**, and you have **received me favorably**. **Please take my gift** which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty." Thus **he urged him and he took it.**

Jacob calls Esau 'my lord', denoting Jacob's humility. Repentance with restitution is impossible without humility. Jacob also said to Esau that he sees his face like the face of God, i.e. he sees a representation in his brother that is reflective of God Himself. But the Bible describes Esau as immoral, godless, a fornicator and a despiser of spiritual birthright (Heb. 12:16,17; Gen. 25:34). These qualities in Esau did not prevent Jacob from making restitution to Esau. Restitution is based on what YOU have to do because of repentance from your prior sin committed against people, and

is not dependent upon the possible current depraved state of the people to whom you must make the restitution. Train the mind of your spirit and your soul to see the 'face' of God even in the most sinful of individuals, to whom you may be required to make restitution.

Further, the men who were with Esau, were there to support him in his revengeful intent on Jacob. But after the repentance, reconciliation and restitution, Esau offers these same men as bodyguards to Jacob. **Restitution can generate amazing results.** The men who were to kill Jacob, are now to protect him. **What the enemy intends for evil, God turns around for good!** What the enemy intends for your destruction, God, through restitutionary repentance, can turn around for your construction.

Gen. 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God **meant it for good** in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

Gen. 33:15 Esau said, **"Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me."** But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord."

After his restitutionary repentance, the 'PAUSE' button on Jacob's destiny was lifted, and God pressed the 'FAST FORWARD' button. The same can be true of you and I.

We have significant Divine destiny attendant with our lives, as Jacob did. We all fail God, in the weakness of our fallen, sinful humanity at times, just like Jacob did. Even though he sinned, Jacob repented with restitution. The will of God for his life was not threatened by the act of his sin. His repentance ensured that the will of God ultimately thrived. The certain fact that God's will for his life would be accomplished, was rooted in God's firm commitment and a serious promise to him, immediately after deceiving Esau and his father, in fraudulently attaining the birthright blessing. Here it is ... :

Gen. 28:15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

The purpose and promises of God for your life will be attained very swiftly when you live in an attitude of reflexive repentance, with restitution where necessary.

In our next session, we will examine a few more case studies of restitution.

[To be Continued]

Great Grace and Peace be multiplied to you,

Randolph Barnwell

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ENDNOTES

1. Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament (electronic ed.), Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, #G605
2. Ibid., #G2540
3. New Webster's Dictionary
4. Oxford Dictionary of English
5. Ibid.
6. Consolidated Webster's Encyclopedia
7. Strong, J. (1890). Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, S.T.D., LL.D., e-Sword X, Version 3.2 (11), Dictionary, #G403
8. Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament (electronic ed.), Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, #G3306
9. **Rev. 3:14-22 : 14** "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: **15** 'I **know your deeds**, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. **16** 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. **17** 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, **18** I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. **19** 'Those **whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.** **20** 'Behold, I **stand at the door and knock**; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. **21** 'He who **overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne**, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. **22** 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
10. Refer to my teaching, "Support for Spiritual Leadership".
11. Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament (electronic ed.), Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, #G4991