



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Weekly Bible Study - 09:11:2011

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Study 20: EVIDENCE OF GENUINE REPENTANCE

Nehemiah 5: 9-13

Following conviction and repentance of the nobles, Nehemiah demanded from them a restoration of the ill-gotten wealth to their rightful owners. Without such a step, there would not be evidence to prove that they were sincere in their repentance. While preaching to the multitudes, John the Baptist demanded for evidence of repentance. Jesus likened this to the fruits of a tree. Genuine Christianity is not a matter of words and professions but actions emanating from deep seated convictions and beliefs.

This act of practically making amends for past wrongs is referred to as restitution, and it is the evidence of genuine repentance. Restitution also involves giving equivalence for loss or damage. God forgives when we repent but he requires us to make amends to any person we have injured or wronged by sinning. It involves paying back just debts, restoring stolen or misappropriated articles, uncovering crimes and confessing lies, and is to be done even if the person injured knew it or not, for God knows.

Some erroneously teach that restitution was part of the law and therefore not binding on Christians. They think that salvation is by faith alone and therefore feel that restitution is an attempt to gain salvation by works. This is not only wrong, but also unbiblical. Scripture shows rather that restitution was instituted before the law, established under the law, practiced during the time of the kings and prophets and upheld under the dispensation of grace. Indeed, restitution is one of the corner stone of faith that modern believers would do well to adhere strictly to (Proverbs 22:28; Job 24:2; II Kings 22:8, 2,11,13,15,16 compare with 21:9-12,19).

I. RESTITUTION BEFORE THE LAW:

Romans 1: 19,20, 2:14,15; I Corinthians 11:14; Genesis 20:1-18.

Even before the Mosaic Law was instituted, God had revealed his **will** and word to humanity. God demanded restitution from Abimelech before Mosaic Law.

2. RESTITUTION UNDER THE LAW

Exodus 21:18,19,22,26-36; 22:1-15; Leviticus 6:2-5; Numbers 5:6-8.

As part of the moral law for Israel, God established restitution. Most sins committed by men are against God as well as their neighbour. Repentance towards God included for Israel, restoration to man of all property gained by fraud, lying or pretence of whatever kind.

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3. RESTITUTION DURING THE PERIOD OF KINGS AND PROPHETS

2 Samuel 12:1-6; compare 16:5-8,13 with 19:16-23; Proverbs 6:30,31; 1 Kings 20:34; 2 Kings 8:1-6; Ezekiel 33:14-16; Ezra 10:1-19,23,24,44; Nehemiah 5:6-13.

The kings of Israel upheld and enforced the practice of restitution. The administration of Israel's rulers reflected the embracing of God's teaching. Church administration today must reflect commitment to Biblical principles. The prophets preached, explained and emphasized the need to make restitution by every backslidden Israelite who is returning to God.

4. RESTITUTION UNDER THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE:

Matt 5:23,24; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-5; 19:8-10; John 4:15-19; Romans 16:17; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Matthew 28:19,20; John 14:26; Acts 2:42; 16:4,5; 23:1-5; 24:16; Philemon 7-21.

Every believer must earnestly contend for and wholeheartedly practice all that Christ taught. The rules of righteous living are just as high (or higher) under the dispensation of grace as those in the Old Testament. When a man is saved he **will** confess and restore if he has robbed, he **will** seek forgiveness for lies, false reports, unjust criticism or any act wherein others have been injured in word or deed. It takes humility to restore, apologise and to do it in the right manner, as obedience to God, not as if we were doing the injured person a favour. Restitution, like any other requirement of God (like repentance or water baptism) is not a self-righteous act to merit us pardon.

Restitution, which would implicate others or bring injury or harm to others, needs care and God's wisdom. In difficult cases, it may be beneficial to seek counselling and / or assistance from faithful ministers who not only teaches but practices the Word of God daily.

In this end times, God is not just looking for people who believe but those who practice the truth. Preaching fiery sermons on restitution to others without practicing it is not enough to gain heaven. We must be doers of the word for it is those who both teach and do that will eventually get to heaven.