

Acknowledge Your Sin (Go To Meeting)

Tom Fannin—November 19, 2022

I want to talk today about acknowledging our sins, which is a very important part repentance. Being able to acknowledge our sins also has an effect on our conversion.

It also has a direct effect on salvation, because God desires that all of us, when we have sin in our lives, that we are examining ourselves, and that we are acknowledging our sins within our lives.

Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Yes, we know in the spiritual walk that we are on with God and Jesus Christ, and walking with each other, from time to time sin does come up within our lives. It’s important that we recognize that and know that. Even after baptism and being in covenant, we know that we will still sin. We all sin and come short of that glory, the glory of God and Christ.

We look forward to the day when we will be changed and we won’t have this carnal mind and physical body anymore, but will have a spiritual body and a completely spiritual mind. As Paul talks about in Corinthians, we’ll be able to see God face-to-face at that time.

1-John 1:8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.”

We can’t say that we don’t have sin, because all sin! As John writes here, the Truth would not be in us, because all of us know that with God’s Word and the Spirit dwelling within us, we have a better understanding of the spiritual things. The Truth of God is, as we know, this mind and nature that we have is inherited; it comes down through Adam.

That’s the Truth of God’s Word, and we know that we have this, yet we fight against it, but that’s part of the inherited nature we have. That is Truth! If we didn’t understand this, the Truth would not be in us. But we do have that Truth.

Verse 9: “If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (vs 9-10).

Yes, God’s Word is in us, and yet, we know we struggle with these things; we do have sin within our lives.

Rom. 6—we cover this a lot when

counseling for baptism, and we review it a lot after our baptism just to give us a reminder of what the expectation is after we’re baptized and enter into covenant.

Romans 6:14: “For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under Law, but under grace.”

- we don’t want sin ruling, the sin within ourselves
- we don’t want sin to be ruling within the Church of God, the Body of Christ

Being under grace we have the help of God’s Spirit dwelling within us, so we can rule over sin!

After we enter into covenant we know that we are no longer servants to sin, but we become servants to righteousness. That’s what we strive to do. All we have to do is live life righteously!

Sin will occur in our lives from time to time, but God’s grace, God’s Spirit working within us, helps us to see sin and repent of it. God’s grace leads us to repentance.

An important part of repentance is **acknowledging** our sin.

- Do we acknowledge it?
- Do we accept it?
- Do we admit it?
- Do we admit that it exists?
- Do we admit that there’s a truth of it?

So, when we come before God we acknowledge it, we tell God:

This does exist within me. I admit this! This is something that is true and I acknowledge it before You!

That’s part of repentance, and it’s an important part of this spiritual walk we’re on, to acknowledge sin in ourselves before God.

Psalm 32:1: “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.:

We know how that happens, through repentance and accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior for the forgiveness of sins.

Verse 2: “Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

We don’t want iniquity imputed to us; *we*

yearn for the imputed righteousness that we have through Jesus Christ!

Verse 3: “When I kept silent, my bones wore away through my groaning all the day long, for by day and by night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah” (vs 3-4)—*think on this!*

Have you ever been in that situation yourself, where there’s something you did within your life or something you were involved in and you knew within you that it wasn’t right? There was something you needed to do. God’s hand was heavy upon us’ God’s Spirit within us working to reveal something to us; that we needed to acknowledge before God and repent of. I’m sure all of us have had that feeling: ***something within me that I need to acknowledge and take care of!***

Verse 5: **“I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgression to the LORD,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.** Selah.”

Isn’t that wonderful? Here David writes that he confessed it, acknowledged it; ***repentance! And God forgave!***

That’s what we need to continue to remember. That’s what God desires, if we all come before Him when we have to times in our lives when we fall short, we acknowledge those things with repentance and move on.

Proverbs 28:13: “He who covers his sins shall not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes *them* shall have mercy.”

That’s true repentance! Confessing our sins to God—acknowledging and also forsaking—a change is made. Those shall have mercy; mercy shall be shown to those who do this.

We don’t want to be covering up sin; we don’t want to be trying to hide our sins from God, because God is very aware of what we do. The person who does that, who wants to cover and hide and not acknowledge, they’re not going to prosper in the spiritual things.

But as long as we’re willing to come before God and repent, we are going to prosper spiritually! Why? We’re going to be closer to God and Jesus Christ when we do this, as we cleanse ourselves and start building more of the mind of God and Jesus Christ. We’re going to be closer to Them spiritually. We’ll always prosper from being spiritually close to God and Jesus Christ.

It mentions *mercy* here, and God continually extends mercy to us when we approach Him!

Jeremiah 3:11: “And the LORD said to me, “The backsliding Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go and cry these words toward the north, and say, “Return, O backsliding Israel,” says the LORD; “*and* I will not cause My anger to fall on you; for I *am* merciful,” says the LORD, “*and* I will not keep My anger forever.... [but there’s a condition here]: ...Only **acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God** and have scattered your ways to strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice,”” says the LORD” (vs 11-13).

God is a merciful God! He’s telling Israel—Judah—that He is merciful, but the condition is that you need to acknowledge what you’re doing and come to Him.

- keep My Word
- keep my Law

Then God will accept that, so that they can be in right standing with God, and so can we!

The thing to remember here is that God is a merciful God! Very merciful; very quick to forgive our sins if we come to Him the right way.

We’re going to review some examples of those in God’s Word in the message today. We’ll just say that there are some examples of those who did well at acknowledging sin. Then some examples of those who did not do well. In acknowledging sin and see the outcomes and what happened because of that.

We know that in God’s Word a lot of the examples are those who are leaders, those expected to be leaders:

- kings
- priests
- ministers
- elders

Those who are in a position to lead! Those are a lot of the examples we have in God’s Word for those who are shown as acknowledging sin and didn’t.

- When you have sin within leadership in the Church, it presents a really big problem, doesn’t it?
- Why?
- Why does sin within leadership present a problem?
 - ✓ it’s because the leadership has a responsibility to teach the Truth
 - ✓ the leadership are very influential people

- ✓ they have the ability in influence God's people in a really good and positive way or a negative way

We look to the leaders within the Church to guide and lead us toward Jesus Christ and God the Father in the Truth! That's the responsibility of a leader.

That's why it's a problem when you have sin within the leadership in the Church of God in the Body of Christ.

God talks about leaders through Paul:

Hebrews 13:17: "Follow your leaders, and be submissive, **because they are looking out for your spiritual well-being...**"

That's something to really take note of there. We're talking about leaders, correct leaders before God and Christ, and the brethren. You're to follow them because they're looking out for your spiritual well-being.

"...as *those who must be* ready to give an account *to God* in order that they may do this with joy, and not *with* groaning because that *would be* unprofitable for you" (v 17).

Those of us who are asked to follow our leaders, **are they truly leading?** Leaders within the Church should be leading us to God and Jesus Christ. That's the leadership that Paul said you need follow. Those who are the ones who are truly looking out for your spiritual well-being.

It's something we need to pay attention to. Yes, we are to follow our leaders and have respect for them, **but it's based on what they are doing!** Paul talks about this and he makes this real clear; let's see what Paul said of himself, because Paul certainly was a spiritual leader for the Church. Look at how much he wrote for us through the inspiration of God to be reserved and canonized in the Bible.

1-Corinthians 11:1: "Be imitators of me, exactly as I also *am* of Christ."

He received his instruction directly from Christ! He strived in his life to be an imitator of Christ. That's is what we need to be looking for as characteristics like that, where we see leadership imitating Jesus Christ, **and we get that through God's Word!**

1-Thessalonians 1:5: "For our Gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in *the* Holy Spirit, and with great conviction; even as you know what sort of men we were among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, having accepted the Word in much persecution with *the* joy of *the* Holy Spirit" (vs 5-6).

They knew what kind of men Paul and the others with him—Silas, Barnabas, Mark, Timothy, Titus, Luke—were by the example that they set, that these were men of God.

They came to them by word of the Truth, by power, through the inner working of Holy Spirit, and this was seen among the brethren. They knew what was at work here; it was visible to all!

It's the same for us today. We should see the fruits in the leaders in what they're doing. We can look to spiritual leaders as our example as long as they're following God.

Like all of us, leaders/ministers have sin, too. But their responsibility is to acknowledge those things and to repent and change.

Like I said, I want look at leaders in God's Word and what they did in acknowledging sin or not acknowledging sin. Let's look at examples of those who did not acknowledge sin and what it caused:

ELI, HOPHNI and PHINEHAS

They were priests of the line of Levi. We all know the responsibility that they had to be faithful to God and God's instructions for the priesthood, and how they were to lead the nation of Israel

1-Samuel 2:22: "And Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who gathered *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

They—Eli's two sons Hophni and Phinehas—were not only doing this but we also know that when they brought the meat that was offered to be sacrificed, they were taking of the best of some of that meat for themselves. So, they were doing several things they should not have been doing right there in front of Israel, and also in front of their father Eli. We know what was said earlier in the chapter about His two sons: *they were worthless men!*

Verse 23: "And he [Eli] said to them, 'Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all the people. No, my sons, for *it is* no good report that I hear. **You make the LORD'S people to transgress**'" (vs 23-24).

That's the problem, when leadership sins and do the things they shouldn't be doing, it causes other people to transgress. It has an effect on other people when the leadership sins. It hurts the faith of some; it sets a terrible example. Those who are weak maybe fall into that example, too. It even causes something those to leave, causing division and all sort of problems.

"...You make the LORD'S people to

transgress. If one man sins against another, the judge shall judge him. But if a man sins against the LORD, who shall plead for him? But they did not hearken to the voice of their father because the LORD desired to slay them” (vs 24-25).

Verse 27: “And there came a man of God to Eli, and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Did I plainly appear to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh’s house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before Me? And did I give to the house of your father all the offerings made by fire from the children of Israel? Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering, which I have commanded in My house? Why do you honor your sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?”’” (vs 27-29).

Eli was allowing all of this to go on, and he didn’t do anything to stop it. Certainly within families we have to make decisions at times, and we will read that later on. It’s tough, but we have to put God first! Eli wasn’t doing this.

Verse 30: “Wherefore, the LORD God of Israel says, ‘I said indeed that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever.’....”

The responsibility of the Levites and the priesthood and what they should be doing was an expectation, and Eli knew this. He knew why he was in that role. He wasn’t doing the job he needed to do.

“...But now the LORD says, ‘Far be it from Me! For those who honor Me I will honor, and those that think little of Me shall be lightly regarded’” (v 30).

That’s what we all want to be doing, *honoring God*, and He will honor us. If we take God and His Word lightly, then we will be regarded lightly.

We know that God was working with Samuel, and he was a young man. You think about Samuel, given to God and God used him mightily. He grew around Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, and he saw all of these things happening. Yet, Samuel stood in favor even as a young man, probably a child here. He stood in favor with God and with man. He was doing what was right and God was working with him.

That’s another example for us. Even in these situations, God works with everyone, and we don’t have to be a part of that, certainly as God worked with Samuel.

1-Samuel 3:11: “And the LORD said to

Samuel, ‘Behold, I will do a thing in Israel at which both the ears of everyone who hears it shall tingle. In that day I will confirm to Eli all that which I have spoken concerning his house, and when I begin I will also make an end, for I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity, **which he knows**, because his sons made themselves vile and he did not restrain them” (vs 11-13).

Eli knew this wasn’t right; he knew that was vile. He knew that was his job as priest to take care of these things. It may not have been easy to deal with his own sons, but that was his responsibility.

Verse 14: “And, therefore, I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever.”

We know that God told Samuel what was going to happen, so Eli asked Samuel to convey to him all that God said to him. So Samuel did.

Verse 18: “And Samuel told him [Eli] all the words, and hid nothing from him. And he [Eli] said, ‘It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him.’”

It’s really sad here, the attitude of Eli. He could have done something about this, even at this point. God is a merciful God. Eli could have acknowledged this. He could have gone before God and could have repented and taken care of his sons. But he chose not to do that, and chose not to acknowledge what was going on. I think it’s pretty interesting what he says here: “...‘It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him.’” What a terrible attitude!

He had reached a point there now where he wasn’t acknowledging God. He just said, basically, what seems good to God. We know what happened, he lost his life and he allowed his sons to take the Ark to go fight the Philistines and they lost their lives.

It didn’t have to be that way, but that’s where he got to. That’s the mind he got to, because over time he didn’t not acknowledge the sin going on there. The sin going with his sons, and the sin going on with himself. He didn’t acknowledge that. He eventually came to that mind.

None of us want to get to that mind. That’s why it’s so important that when we have things going on in our lives, or when these things are happening with the leadership in the Churches of God, they need to be acknowledged.

KING SAUL

Another example of someone who did not acknowledge what he was doing. We know the

account here that Saul was given some really clear instructions. He was to go to the Amalekites and King Agag. He was to totally destroy everything, completely destroy it. He was not to have respect of anyone, he was to destroy it all, even their animals.

But Saul didn't do this; he disobeyed. He kept alive Agag and the best of some of their animals.

1-Samuel 15:10: "And the Word of the LORD came to Samuel saying, 'It repents Me that I have set up Saul *to be* king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not performed My commandments.' And it grieved Samuel, and he cried *out to* the LORD all night" (vs 10-11).

So, Saul turned back from his responsibility. What was his responsibility? *He was the king!* He was anointed to be king over Israel. He was anointed by Samuel; directed by God to do that. He turned back from that responsibility, that anointing he was given to be king. He did not perform the commandments of God.

Verse 17: "And Samuel said, '**When you were little in your own sight**, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel.'"

When he had a completely different mind or attitude. But that changed over time, because of the things that he was doing. Not following God, not keeping God's commandments to him. His mind changed and he was no longer little in his own eyes, he was no longer humble. It looks like he probably started thinking a lot about himself and who he was.

Verse 22: "And Samuel said, 'Does the LORD *have as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice! To hearken *is* better than the fat of rams, **for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.** Because you have rejected the Word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king!'" (vs 22-23).

That's what can happen if we're not following God and acknowledging our sin, not repenting! We get turned over to a different mind. We get turned over this mind that Samuel pretty much told him, that he was stubborn, rebelling, and as Samuel lays out here, ***rebellion is like witchcraft!*** It's a totally different mind; it's a mind that Satan the demons have.

Stubbornness is a sin, iniquity, idolatry, because you have your mind on yourself. You're thinking about something else, not thinking about yielding yourself to God.

Verse 28: "And Samuel said to him, 'The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours *who is* better than you.... [we know that was David] ...And also the Glory of Israel will not lie nor repent, for He *is* not a man that He should repent'" (vs 28-29).

All these things happened and all these things were stated to him and brought to his attention by Samuel from God.

Verse 30: "Then he [Saul] said, 'I have sinned. Please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and turn again with me. And I shall worship the LORD **your** God.'"

Was this read repentance? *It looks to me like what Saul was requesting was Samuel go with him so in front of the people he may have honor, not honor before God!*

Honor before God would have been to honor God with acknowledgement and true repentance. But this isn't what Saul was doing here. He clearly referred to God as being ***the God of Samuel***, and wasn't the God of Saul anymore.

Looking at God's Word here, it doesn't appear like that wasn't what was on Saul's mind anymore. Very similar to what we saw with Eli, where he had just forgotten what his responsibility was and what he was supposed to be doing. He certainly didn't acknowledge any of that.

We have these examples of Eli and Saul to learn from. That's why they've been recorded in God's Word. Every word of these things that are written down is for us to study upon and learn from.

Psalms 78:5: "For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should teach them to their children; so that the generation to come might know *them*, children, which shall be born; and they shall arise and tell *them* to their children, so that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (vs 5-7).

This is what God desires. I know that we'll see this in the Millennium with families, a continual generation after generation of teaching; and instruction in:

- God's Word
- God's commandments
- God's way of life

Everyone sets their hope in that, and they see the outcome of it of blessings, joy and happiness.

Verse 8: "And might not be like their fathers..."—*like the examples that we've talked*

about here!

Paul said in 1-Cor. 10 that what the fathers did was recorded as an example for us.

Verse 8: “And might not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not set their heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful with God.”

That’s something we all need to be considering. We don’t want to be like them. We don’t want to have that attitude where we’re stubborn and rebellious. We don’t think things are right with God when our spirit is not faithful.

Something to consider and, again, it’s an example here for all us. We want to be right with God. God knows when we’re stubborn and rebellious and things go on within the Church that shouldn’t be going on, particularly when things go on with leadership within the Church, those who are supposed to be examples to lead us to Christ and God the Father.

We can apply Psalms 50 toward ourselves; we also maybe can apply it toward the Church and what goes on within the Body of Christ.

Psalm 50:16: “But to the wicked God says, ‘What right have you to declare My statutes, and to take up My covenant in your mouth?’”

It’s a question, what is it to you? Think about Eli, think about King Saul, what was it for them to declare these things as leaders?

Verse 17: “Yea, you hate to be taught, and you cast My words behind you. When you saw a thief, then you were pleased to be with him, and you have taken part with adulterers” (vs 17-18).

- What should our part be?
- Who should we take up with?

Verse 19: “You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit.” *We see this sometimes within the Church past and present!* It shouldn’t be happening!

Verse 20: “You sit; you speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son. These things you have done, **and I have kept silence...**” (vs 20-21).

So, God sees, and sometimes God allows things to go on to see what’s going to happen, what we’re all going to do. Where our hearts and minds lie!

“...you thought that I was like yourself... [that’s what happens when we go against God; our mind starts changing] ...but I will rebuke you, and

set them in order before your eyes. Now, consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and he who sets his conduct aright, I will show him the salvation of God” (vs 21-23).

Brethren, praising and glorifying God is acknowledging when we fall short in our sins. It is, and it needs to be happening within the Church. **God knows!**

We’ll look at some good examples, those leading within God’s Church at a time when sin was involved. There was an acknowledgement of it, and repentance.

KING DAVID

1-Chronicles 21:1: “And **Satan** stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel.”

Stop there and recognize that Satan has his part in a lot of things that go on within the Church. He is the tempter and he loves to get involved within the Church and take a foothold and cause disruptions and problems; cause a weakening within the Body of Christ, just like he did at this time, just like he did to Israel. So, any opportunity that Satan has to do this, he will do this. We need to be aware of that, and who is behind a lot of these things that occur within the Church.

Verse 2: “And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, ‘Go number Israel from Beersheba to Dan. And bring the number of them to me so that I may know.’ And Joab answered, ‘May the LORD add to His people a hundred times... [it’s God’s people; these were people David as king was responsible for] ...but my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord’s servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?’” (vs 2-3).

This shouldn’t have been done. Sometimes we may get help from someone when we’re about to do something we shouldn’t do. Joab was trying to encourage David not to do this, ‘they’re your servants, King David, don’t do this thing.’

At times we may see an encouragement from others within the Church to say, ‘Don’t do this. Change, acknowledge what’s going on here. You don’t want to be doing this.’ It didn’t happen here.

Verse 4: “But the king’s word prevailed against Joab. And Joab departed and went up and down all Israel, and came again to Jerusalem. And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to David. And in all Israel there were one million and a hundred thousand men who drew the sword. And in Judah *were* four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword. But Levi and Benjamin he did

not count among them, for the king's word was abominable to Joab. And **God was displeased with this thing; therefore, He struck Israel.** And David said to God, **'I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing....** [David recognized that he had done it] ...But now, I beseech You, remove the iniquity of Your servant for I have done very foolishly'" (vs 4-8).

Verse 11: "And Gad came to David and said to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Choose for yourself: Either three years of famine, or three months to be swept away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else three days of the sword of the LORD, even the plague in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the border of Israel.'" And now say what word I shall bring again to Him Who sent me'" (vs 11-12).

Verse 13: "And David said to Gad, 'I am in great distress.... [I'd hate to be in this situation, but David caused this] ...Let me fall now into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies *are* very great.... [tie in Jer. 3; God is merciful] ...But do not let me fall into the hand of man.'" "

Verse 14: "So, the LORD sent a plague upon Israel. And there fell seventy thousand men of Israel. And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. And as he was destroying, the LORD looked. And He repented of the evil and said to the angel who destroyed, **'Enough! Stay your hand now!'** And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between the earth and heaven, and his sword drawn in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem. And David and the elders *of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces*" (vs 14-16).

Verse 17: "And David said to God, 'Did not I command to number the people? Even I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed. But these sheep, what have they done?....'" "

David recognized that he did this and was responsible for this. They were God's sheep! David was given the responsibility of king to shepherd the sheep, Israel. He knew this; he knew what it was like to be a shepherd.

"...I pray You, let Your hand be upon me, O LORD my God, and upon my father's house, but not upon Your people, that they should be plagued'" (v 17).

So, we'll stop there with this account. But David did acknowledge this, didn't he? Boy, what a penalty; think of 70,000 men died! Think about the effect that had in that nation. Think about the wives

that became widows. Think about the children involved. This was a great sin and the penalty to go with it. **But David acknowledge it; this was on him! He had caused this, and he took the responsibility for it.**

- What can be averted if we come to God quickly and acknowledge our sins?
- What can be averted?

There was some averting here upon Jerusalem where God said enough to the angel that was destroying (v 15)!

It's something for all of us to think about, ourselves or with what goes on within the Church, what can be averted if we quickly acknowledge what's going on?

A quality of a spiritual leader is to **acknowledge before God what's been done.** But also, leadership within the Church needs to acknowledge it **to the people!** It's not just to God. When sin occurs within leadership, true repentance is that they will also come to the people and let the people know that something has happened, a sin has occurred that they were responsible for and they've repented. They should ask for their forgiveness also.

This is an important part of repentance within leadership within the Church. We have seen in the past—those of us who have been in the Church a long time—sins within the Church and things that were not done correctly. Was there repentance from leadership? *I don't know! But God knows!* However, I never saw repentance the majority of the time toward God's people, to ask for forgiveness of the effect the sins had on the people and what it did.

In many faith was shaken and caused some to leave and have doubts: Is this the Church of God? That's why it's important for leadership to acknowledge sin and repent, but also come to the people and ask for forgiveness for the effect upon the people.

IF things like this were done as they should be done, what can be prevented within the Church going forward? *We know quite a bit!*

Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge" (vs 1-4).

This is David's example for us; he acknowledged his sin. He went to God! By doing this he made it very clear where his mind was at with God, and made it very clear how righteous God is in His judgment and Word. God's Word is true and His judgments and laws are perfect. They're set for us to follow. When we go against them and acknowledge and magnify God and His Law and what He's doing and have total respect for Him and Jesus Christ.

EZRA

We know that in the book of Ezra that by the prophecies in Jeremiah that there was a time of captivity, but after 70 years there would be an opportunity for some to go back to Jerusalem and build the House of God. Cyrus allowed that.

Here was a group of Israelites, those from Judah, who had been in captivity were allowed to come back and work on the House of God. We know that Ezra was a true priest of God. Actually Ezra definitely traced his lineage back to the priesthood. We see something recorded here of what happened:

Ezra 9:1: "1: Now, when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, 'The people of Israel, and the priests and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands. But *they are doing* according to their abominations, those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites'"

They had really mixed themselves in with a lot of the nations! When Israel initially went into the 'promised land' God wanted those nations to be driven out and He definitely didn't want Israel to be mixing in with them.

Verse 2: "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so the Holy seed is mixed with the people of *those* lands. Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers has been chief in this sin."

They had mixed themselves in with that. What damage does that cause when you mix yourself in with something that's not correct? I think about ourselves and how we can apply this. We are a Holy Seed; we are the House of God that we are building continually upon the foundation laid by Jesus Christ, Him being the Chief Cornerstone!

As we build this spiritual house, we definitely don't want to be mixing in with other things, or bringing things in that pollute the Spiritual Seed, this Holy Seed. ***We have to be really careful about what we join up with!***

Verse 3: "And when I heard this thing, I tore

my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down appalled. Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel was gathered to me because of the faithlessness of those who had been exiled. And I sat *there* appalled until the evening sacrifice. And at the evening sacrifice I rose up from my fasting, even with my garment and my mantle torn, and I fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God. And I said, 'O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have increased over *our* heads, and our guiltiness has grown up to the heavens'" (vs 3-6).

This is acknowledgment of the sin that was going on there with those people who had returned back!

Verse 7: "Since the days of our fathers *we have been* in great guilt to this day. And for our iniquities we, our kings, our priests, have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day. And now for a little moment, grace has been *shown* from the LORD our God to leave us a remnant to escape and to give us a *strong* peg in His Holy place, so that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a little reviving in our bondage, For we *were* slaves, yet, our God has not forsaken us in our bondage, but has extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments" (vs 7-10).

It goes on to talk about what they had done. God had given them instructions not to mix in with others, because they would potential adopt and take in some of the things that the nations did that were an abomination toward God or a against God.

Because of this, they separated! What a tough time that would be. I mean, think about families, and they had married and I'm sure had children. But this was brought to their attention and they needed to take care of this. Very tough situation, but nonetheless, they acknowledged what they had done and separated themselves from those whom they had joined up with.

Sometimes in our lives we're going to face this, too, where there are some difficult times that we come across in our lives and we have to acknowledge things. We may have to separate, but the separation is because:

- we're on God's side
- we're following God
- we believe God

- we keep His Word
- we want to please God
- we love God
- we want to keep God first

That's why the separation occurs because the others are not of that mind. It's hard to do, but it's correct before God!

This was another example of someone in Ezra and also the people there that acknowledged what they did, and they took care of it, and God blessed them for doing that.

When we sin—and we all do—we need to acknowledge it. We all need to be continually examining ourselves.

1-Cor.11—we read this during Passover time, but it applies all the time:

1-Corinthians 11:28: “But let a man examine himself, and let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup accordingly, because the one who eats and drinks unworthily is eating and drinking judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord. For this *very* reason, many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many have fallen asleep” (vs 28-30).

We can look at this a couple of different ways: spiritually and physically both, because we're not discerning correctly the Body of Christ. We're not discerning God's Word and His instructions to us correctly.

Verse 31: “Now, if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by *the* Lord, so that we will not be condemned with the world” (vs 31'-32).

God does not want us to be condemned with the world. God called us to be in His Kingdom as firstfruits. So, God wants us to be continually examining ourselves and where we're at; to discern ourselves correctly and to be sure that what we're doing is correct with God. If it's not:

- acknowledgement
- accept it
- admit it
- repent and change

So, we need to be keep looking toward Christ, ***because Christ is our true Spiritual Leader!*** We want to properly discern Him and His body, and what He has done for us as being ***our true Spiritual Leader!***

We know that sin does occur within the Church, the Body of Christ. When this happens we need to examine ourselves and where we're at. When sin happens within the Body of Christ:

- it causes problems within the body
- it causes divisions within the body
 - we need to continue to pray for one another
 - we need to keep each other on our mind
 - we need to continue to have a mind where we're willing to forgive and have forgiveness also

Praying that there's repentance:

- that we all repent
- that we all acknowledge what we need to acknowledge
- that we all have proper discernment and proper understanding of what's going on
- that our mind is in line with God's mind and Christ's mind

We need to pray for everyone! Something else that's important here in Gal. 6 is to keep our mind on ourselves.

Galatians 6:1: “Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in some offense, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.”

We have to consider our own selves and where we're at, because we can be tempted, too.

Verse 2: “Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ. For **if anyone thinks himself to be something...**” (vs 2-3).

A lot of times people can think themselves to be something:

“...**when he is nothing...**” (v 3). *That truly all we are, ***nothing!****

It's because of our calling and the grace extended to us through God and Christ that we have this understanding and the opportunity that we have

“...**he is deceiving himself.** But let each one prove his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for each one shall bear his own burden” (vs 3-5).

So, the point here is that we just continually need to consider ourselves, what we're doing and where we're at, because we can fall into problems and issues ourselves.

Earlier in 1-Chron. we talked about Satan standing up there against Israel. He wants to stand up against the Church and take root in the Church any way he can, he and his demons. He works within the Church, and through people and plants tares. We know that in God's Word what I'm speaking about here we know it to be true, because

it's in God's Word. We need to be mindful of this and what he does.

2-Corinthians 2:10: "But to whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; and if I also have forgiven anything, to whomever I have forgiven *it*, for your sakes **I forgave it in the person of Christ.**"

That's how Paul forgave; how Christ would do it, but before that there needed to be acknowledgement and repentance! There was with the person here being talked about.

Verse 11: "**So that we may not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.**"

Satan schemes within the Church of God continually, but we should not be ignorant of that, and be outwitted by that. So, here was this man in 1-Cor. 5 that the Church had to put out because of his sin. But it looks like he came back and had repented a sorrowful repentance.

But we know the scheme of Satan where maybe when he's trying to come back and he's repented, then are the people judging, causing him to overly sorrow because of their attitude toward him; not an attitude of love, concern and care.

That's what was going on here. Paul is saying to remember this, and we are not ignorant of Satan and his devices and schemes. In today's church we need to be mindful of the same things and be very careful.

Again, pray for one another, pray for repentance and that we can all be in the Kingdom as firstfruits to fulfill this calling.

1-John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does sin... [yes, we're going to sin] ...**we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the propitiation... [we know that continual atonement] ...for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world**" (vs 1-2).

We should always reflect on this. We're going to sin and fall short, but ***IF*** we acknowledge our sins, admit to God that they exist, and have a true repentance toward God, ***we have this Advocate for us, Jesus Christ Who sits as the right hand of God, and our sins are forgiven!***

We can remember this ourselves, and we can also admonish others to remember this, also. ***Very important!*** We can thank God and Jesus Christ for giving us this opportunity for Christ's sacrifice, for God's grace that leads us to repentance where we can acknowledge these things. ***We can thank both***

God the Father and Jesus Christ for the opportunity that we have for eternal life!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 3:23
- 2) 1 John 1:8-10
- 3) Romans 6:14
- 4) Psalm 32:1-5
- 5) Proverbs 28:13
- 6) Jeremiah 3:11-13
- 7) Hebrews 13:17
- 8) 1 Corinthians 11:1
- 9) 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6
- 10) 1 Samuel 2:22-25, 27-30
- 11) 1 Samuel 3:11-14, 18
- 12) 1 Samuel 15:10-11, 17, 22-23, 28-30
- 13) Psalm 78:5-8
- 14) Psalm 50:16-23
- 15) 1 Chronicles 21:1-8, 11-17
- 16) Psalm 51:1-4
- 17) Ezra 9:1-10
- 18) 1 Corinthians 11:28-32
- 19) Galatians 6:1-5
- 20) 2 Corinthians 2:10-11
- 21) 1 John 2:1-2

Scripture referenced, not quoted:

- 2-Corinthians 10
- 1-Corinthians 5

TF:bo
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