

Joy and Peace Honoring God

‡ in repentant faith (vv.9-10)

‡ in sanctified life (v.11)

In the name of Jesus, who delivers us from the narrows of sin into the open spaces of grace:

If you saw a video of the man's life, it would make the climax of a great movie. A lonely king finds his true love. They're having a baby together. But on the inside the man is dying. Torn up by guilt, he can't sleep at night. Everything in his life is a lie. He thinks he's covered his tracks until a preacher comes and tells him a story. He does not know what it means until after he gets angry – at the man in the story. Kings were also judges. So he judges the man guilty of death. That's when Nathan the prophet says to King David: ***"You are the man."*** His sin of adultery and murder he tried to cover up. But God knows, and now David has pronounced his own death sentence.

If you've been there in the depths of despair, you will love the rest of the story. David confessed: ***"I have sinned against the LORD."*** Nathan pronounced absolution: ***"The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."*** But then he went on: ***"Because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."*** (2 Samuel 12:1-14 NIV84) What David did hurt God's Name-reputation. People could laugh at the LORD for supporting such a wicked king. And since Nathan said violence and bloodshed would never leave David's family, how could he possibly know **Joy and Peace Honoring God**? My dear friends, behold the miracle of God's grace...

‡ in repentant faith (vv.9-10)

The Lord's Apostle Paul penned the words of our text nearly 1100 years after David. Yet the same Holy Spirit inspired both writers to put down the very words of God in the original Hebrew and Greek. These are not lessons for years gone by when the world was different. The only thing really different is that Judgment Day is nearer now than it was then. You and I are one day closer to meeting our Maker and Judge. These three verses are vital to where we spend eternity.

Corinth had a very talented congregation of sometimes conceited Christians. They were so certain of their own opinions that they sued each other in court in front of unbelievers. Rather than being wronged, they did wrong to make sure no one took advantage of them. Such legal wrangling damages the Lord's Name-reputation. Remember the old song? "Sometimes I think it's a sin when I feel like I'm winning, but I'm losing again." As Paul put it: ***"The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers."*** (1 Corinthians 6:7f NIV84)

Pastor Paul needs to talk tough to help them see the depth of their sin. This strikes close to home. ***"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."*** To be merciful to each other, we need to see God's mercy on us. We need to see the way we were.

This past week I got another lesson in how this is on people's minds. A dear Roman Catholic neighbor asked me about homosexuality. The media is convinced some are born that way. With no scientific evidence they want it to be true as if that would somehow make it right. But look at this through the lens of God's Word. How did violence and immorality come into the world? Wasn't it Adam's rebellion? And doesn't the Bible say we pass this birth defect of original sin from one generation to the next? Every generation proves God's Word, as when Cain murdered his brother Abel, ***"The wages of sin is death."*** (Romans 6:23) God also says, ***"Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one***

point is guilty of breaking all of it.” (James 2:10 NIV84) In other words, even if you do not have homosexual tendencies, heterosexual lust is just as bad. If sexual sins don’t tempt you, coveting someone else’s position or wealth makes you just as guilty to God. Even without alcoholism, a loose tongue or ears that love slander convict you. God’s prophet Nathan says: **“You are the man.”** “You are the woman.”

Two extremes we need to avoid as Christians living in a sinful world: not to excuse the sins of others, and not to deceive ourselves as being better. **“For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.”** (Romans 11:32 NIV84) That’s God’s goal, to have mercy on us all. But first God has to convince us that we need His mercy. Then God can give us priceless gifts of **Joy and Peace Honoring God – in repentant faith.** God does not want us to despair. That’s why we need to talk about these sins with humble hearts as forgiven sinners who want to share this Good News with others: **“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, purifies us from all sin.”** (1 John 1:7) **Repentant faith** has its rewards in...

✠ in sanctified life (v.11)

A video of David’s life would miss his pain inside. Our media spins “Gay Pride” as if triumphant, and greedy Americans too. Sin always promises happiness, but sin is never satisfied. It lies its way into people’s hearts then paves a broad, easy highway to a place God calls **“the fiery lake of burning sulfur...the second death.”** (Revelation 21:8) Dear listener, it does not have to end that way for you.

Fortunately, you can hear God’s Word today and take it to heart. Before it’s too late, God provides an escape from sin’s prison of guilt and despair. Somewhere I heard that this is a favorite passage of repentant homosexuals; it is certainly one of mine. After warning about all those sins that tangle people’s lives, Paul comforts us: **“That is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”**

The past tense is very important: That’s the way you **“were.”** You’re not like that anymore. Why? Because God gave you a bath, an awesome bath in Word-powered water that cleaned you deep inside. God’s promise connected to the water of Baptism – **“in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”** – washed your conscience clean. Instead of guilt and fear you get to see a whole different side of God. His loving, kind and gentle heart wants to hold you as a father gives a bear hug to his long lost child. God the Holy Spirit sets you apart as His very own by God’s Word in your Bible reading and listening to sermons. Personally, God declared you, “Not guilty!” He gave you the hand of faith so He could hold your hand. You walk together with God in the freedom of a whole new attitude. Instead of running away from God, you’re running away from sin, back to God **in sanctified life.** Instead of dying in sinful pleasure that can never satisfy, you’re living the satisfying new life of sweet, sweet love from God for your neighbor. You’re learning the meaning of His Name: **“the Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Look again at David and Bathsheba. Their first son died, but they humbly accepted God’s discipline as their **Lord.** Then in amazing grace God gave them two more sons. The first they named Solomon who became the next king. The second was Nathan, same name as the prophet who told David about his sin. You see, David had faith in a Substitute. We look back and see how **“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us.”** He was the world’s most **“sexually immoral...idolater...adulterer,”** every type of **“offender...thief...greedy... drunkard...slanderer...swindler...”** – in short the worst sinner who ever lived, not by His own sin, but by all of ours. We could never **“inherit the kingdom of God”** until God’s own Son signed His last will and testament in blood. David could see this Substitute coming in the **Christ** of God. Both sons of David and Bathsheba were ancestors of Jesus Christ: Solomon in the legal line through stepfather Joseph (Matthew 1); Nathan the blood line through the virgin Mary (Luke 3).

I could enjoy this whole day describing the **Joy and Peace** that comes with **Honoring God in repentant faith and in sanctified life.** But the real sermon belongs to you. You are the only Bible most people will ever read. Show them. Let your love warm their hearts with God’s great Amen!