

Zechariah 12:10-14 When God Gives Victory (Part 2 - Repentance)

Last week, we considered the outward effects of victory for God's people. As God gives victory to his people, he confuses the plans of his enemies. And, as God gives victory, he strengthens his people. Well, there is more. Over the next two weeks, we will look at two more aspects of victory: Repentance and Sanctification. We must know that God is the ONE who will continue to bless his people with victory, and this victory will not come without repentance and cleansing (sanctification). Today, we only have time for repentance which we will see in vv. 10-14.

There is no victory without repentance. Look at vv. 10-14: **“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land shall mourn, each family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves.”** What amazing verses of prophecy we have before us! Zechariah looks forward to a time when God will “*pour out*” a spirit of “*grace*” and “*pleas for mercy*” upon his people. I believe this is true repentance. AND . . . this repentance will come as the people of God “*mourn*” over someone they have killed, which is the meaning of the word “*pierced*.” Brothers and sisters, the truth revealed in this text pictures the greatest of sins, a sin EVEN against God himself. AND, this text pictures for us the great mercy and grace of God to grant repentance for such a great sin. We need these words today!

Let's look at our text more closely and see what we can learn. I have three observations about what repentance looks like: 1) Repentance is necessary because of sin against God, 2) Repentance must be real, and 3) Repentance is given by God.

1. Repentance is necessary because of sin against God. Look at v. 10. He says they will “***look on me, on him whom they have pierced.***” OH the depths of mystery in this verse! The word for “pierced” means to drive a spear through someone in order to kill. And God is the subject of these words as if to say, “*I am the ONE*” who will be killed. We will come back to the specifics of this truth in a moment. But first, let's establish a principle that will always stand. Repentance is necessary because we have sinned against God. Adam and Eve disobeyed the command of God. This was sin! And, this is still sin! As our children's catechism asks: “*What is sin?*” Answer: “*Any naughtiness against any of God's commands.*”

Now, our sins affect many people. And many of our sins today are directed at other people. But, first and foremost, all sins are directed against God. This means, in order for repentance to be true, we must begin with God. Do you remember the great sins of King David? Adultery, lying, murder, stealing (another man's wife), coveting, etc? Do you remember his prayer of repentance?

What did he say? Ps. 51:3-4: **“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.”** Such is the case with ANY real repentance. **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23).

Now, let’s think a little more about the words: **“They will look on me whom they have pierced.”** The overall context of these verses (going back to 12:1-9) is one of WAR and BATTLE. Picture an army, that in the midst of victory, the soldiers realize their commander has been slain in battle. How horrible would this be, to lose your beloved commander! But, to make things worse, the people of the army realize they are the ones responsible for his death. And then, realizing it is their fault, (THEY are the ones who killed their commander), they mourn and lament and cry out with great emotions from the heart. Many of us in this room know what it is like to mourn the death of a loved one. But, to know that “you” may be responsible for their death takes mourning to another level. And then, to think that the ONE I’ve killed is not just the king of an earthly realm, but the LORD of the UNIVERSE.

In our text, this is what we are faced with. *“God is the ONE who is pierced”* (killed). Now, we know that God, in his essence, in his deity, cannot change, which means dying is out of the question. From this perspective, God cannot and never will He die. This is impossible! But, when we come to the NT, the Apostle John says these words find their fulfillment at the cross of Christ. And if we’ve been reading Zechariah rightly as these words of prophecy look forward to the Kingdom of the Son, this verse begins to make sense.

Turn with me to John 19:33-37. Speaking of the cross the Apostle John says: **“But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.””** John says these things took place that Scripture (Zechariah) might be fulfilled. Brothers and sisters, **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”** (John 1:14). In the man, Christ Jesus, we find the fullness of God. And this is the man who laid down his life on the cross. He was **“pierced for our transgression, crushed for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed”** (Is. 53:5).

And what happened after his death and his resurrection, and then later with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit? The Apostles and his disciples, Jews and Gentiles alike, all look upon Jesus with great mourning, knowing that it was THEIR sins that led him to the cross to lay down his life as a sacrifice, THEIR sacrifice. And to look on HIM, the Lord Jesus, is to look to God. For **““He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were**

created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:15-20). This is why Thomas, after seeing and feeling his wounds can say to Jesus, “**My Lord and My God**” (John 20:28). This is true repentance! To look on the ONE whom we have pierced. (Application: It is not good enough just to tell God you are sorry. This is what the religions of the world do. But, real repentance looks to the Son!)

2. Repentance must be real. It must be heartfelt. There is nothing fake about real repentance. We see this truth in two examples given by Zechariah. The first is in v. 11 he says, “**it will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.**” I believe these verses are given to Israel in their day as a picture, as they mourn the death of one of their greatest kings, Josiah. King Josiah was “*pierced*” with an arrow in the Plains of Megiddo during a battle (2 Kings 23:29). Of King Josiah, it is written: “**Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him**” (2 Kings 23:25). After his death, it is written that Israel had a yearly day of mourning as they remembered King Josiah, which would have been ongoing even in Zechariah’s day. I think the people would have understood this picture. They longed to go back to such a godly king before their exile. And their mourning would have been REAL.

The second picture is found in v. 10 which says, “**They shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.**” I think of Egypt during the time of the Exodus. Can you imagine EVERY Egyptian father and mother losing their firstborn to sudden death. Some of you have lost children in the womb. Some of you may have lost a young child. Some have certainly lost a child to death. And even if it is not a child, all of us have lost someone in the family to death. And we know what mourning looks like. There is nothing “fake” about it.

Brothers and sisters, this is the heart of true repentance: to look on the ONE that you yourself have been responsible to kill and to mourn and lament because of this truth. This is what Christians do! We hear the words of the Gospel, that the sinless Son of God died for our sins. And, from the depths of our hearts, we mourn. And we say, “My sins put him there.” My anger, my adultery, my love for myself, my idolatry, . . . put him there. Turn with me to 2 Cor. 7:10-11. Paul says, “**For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you . . .**” This means there is a “kind” of repentance a “worldly” repentance that does not lead to salvation. In many cultures, when someone dies, the family will hire professional mourners. But, they are not real. They are actors. At the end of the day, real

repentance looks to Christ as the ONE who died for his/her sins. And there is no “personal” motive or “personal” gain, only humility and a real, heartfelt, knowledge that Christ died for your sins. This is why Jesus says, **“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”** (Matt. 5:4). I say these words with the most seriousness, both to myself and to all of you. Please do not sit here week after week and harden your hearts to the Gospel!

3. Repentance is given by God. We see this in v. 10: **“I will pour out on the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy . . .”** This is pretty simple I think. Here we see God sending a “spirit of grace” upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the House of David. And then, what is the result of this “pouring out of this spirit”? The one upon whom this Spirit falls will do what? He/She will cry out for mercy. And God will give mercy that leads to salvation. This is repentance. And, this is given by God!

At the end of the day, the Spirit of God grants repentance. And the result of this work of grace is that a sinner looks to Christ, the ONE whom He/She has pierced. This is the great work of the Spirit of God. And no work of the Spirit is greater than this! Look at 13:9 **“They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘They are my people’; and they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”** The picture given is that of a fountain, a fountain that flows forever, but instead of water flowing down, it is the Spirit of God. Look at the first part of v. 13:1: **“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . .”**

When I lived in Mexico (many years ago), I lived with families. And none of them had permanent showers in their homes. So, in order to bathe, my “mama” would boil a large pot of water. And I would take that water and mix it with cold water (probably about 3 gallons of water). I would take a cup and wet myself. Then, I would lather up. And finally, I would take the rest of the water and just “pour” the water over myself to mimic a shower where the water continually flowed over my body. Well, this is what we have “on that day.” We are in that day. When God poured out the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, what did Peter say. He quoted Joel 2:28: **“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh . . .”** We will see this truth more next week. But, my point for now is that God is the ONE who is pouring out the Spirit. God is the ONE who does the work of cleansing. God grants repentance through the power of the Holy Spirit! When someone truly looks upon the Son with mourning, with pleas of mercy, this comes by the power of God, not man. Now, from our perspective, WE are the ones who repent. This is true! But, who give the grace and the power to do this? It is God. 1 Cor. 12: 3 says, **“Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.”**

So, what does this mean for us? Let me make a couple comments in closing.

Today is the day of salvation. We live in the days of the Kingdom of the Son. There is still time to repent, believe on the Lord Jesus, and be saved. So, don’t delay!

Salvation is from God. From our perspective, we believe; we repent. We cry out in repentance. We see that our sins sent Jesus to the cross. We look on Him as the ONE we have pierced. But, who grants repentance? It is God.

I will finish for now, though there is much more to be said. Today, there is no victory without repentance. Next week, we will look at cp. 13 as we will see more closely what accompanies repentance, which is cleansing from sin. I will end with 13:1: **“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.”**

Let's pray.