***Confession and Repentance

Colossians 2:18-19

COL-468***

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Our subject is "The Error of Angelic Worship," number 25 in Colossians 2:18-19.

**The Prize**

With the gift of salvation comes a very special prize. It is the prize of a spiritual power system unique to church age believers: the age of grace. The Laodicean Christians were grossly carnal. They were a carnal lot as a church congregation, and as individual church members. They did possess great material wealth. They had prestige, and they had power, but they were out of temporal fellowship in a very horrendous way – out of fellowship with their Heavenly Father. They did not, as we spoke at the banquet, have the honored title of walking with God as did Enoch and Noah. They did not have the honored title of being the friends of God as did Abraham. They did not have a title certainly of being people after God's own heart.

**The Laodicean Christians**

That is the prize that is ours potentially. The Christian who can go through life with those qualities true of him, is an individual who is going to enjoy his eternity a lot more than those who have focused only on things that are of this world passing through. In Laodicea, that's the kind of people they were. They were out of fellowship with their Father. They were spiritual paupers. They were weak on church-age doctrine. And they had few treasures of reward and heaven in the future. They stood, the Lord said, spiritually naked in their lukewarm reversionism.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ told these reversionistic Laodiceans to restore themselves to spiritual fellowship with the Father. And they were to do this by purchasing three things from Him, by their faith in church-age doctrine and duties. We have this in Revelation 3:18.

**Buy Gold from Christ**

They were, first of all, advised to buy from Christ gold, which had been refined by fire; that is, by the holiness of God. They were to buy the gold of church doctrine, and thus of the mind of God – the Holy Spirit, grace-age living. This is real wealth.

**Buy White Garments**

Secondly, they were to buy white garments signifying experiential sanctification to cover the shame of no covering for their undergarments, of absolute righteousness, for salvation. They had the undergarments of absolute righteousness, but they did not have the covering garments over that. That you make for yourself.

**Buy Eye Salve**

Then thirdly, they were told to buy spiritual eye salve, to restore their discernment of spiritual things, with eyes which had become so blinded by their own carnality. The reason for this, they were told, at the end of verse 18, was so that: "you may see." This is a great problem within Christendom today. Christians do not see spiritual realities. Christians do not see things the way they are in God's viewpoint. This word "to see" means to have spiritual discernment. The lack of personal spirituality, controlled by the Holy Spirit, robbed the Laodiceans of their discernment.

So, the purchase of these three things will give you eyes that see things the way God sees them. It is the desire of the Lord Jesus Christ for the Laodiceans to possess spiritual insight and to discern their own true condition. This word is "blepo" – "that you may see." This is in present tense, which means that this would be the constant status of Christians. You should never be out of step, not to be able to see yourself spiritually, and not to see where you're going in life, relative to the future in eternity, and relative to the will of God. It is active. It is the personal ability of spiritual discernment. This is something that we should always be praying for: "God, help me to see reality spiritually. Help me to see myself as You see me."

However, this is subjunctive, which means that this is potential. A lot of Christians never see themselves at all – the way they are. That was it in Laodicea. They thought that they were really hot stuff. And the said not, "You're not even dressed, let alone to be hot stuff." They were in a spiritually benighted condition.

So, while the Laodicean congregation, with its social and intellectual arrogance, boasted of its spiritual insights, the Lord Jesus Christ declared that they were spiritually blind, and thus, to be totally in the dark. And when you're in the dark, all you have is religion. You have organization, but you do not have spiritual reality. That is often the case with religious organizations. The most precious thing a Christian possesses is eyes capable of spiritual illumination. Without this is a cold, dark world of self-delusion and self-injury from Satan.

**Light**

How do you get eyes that see? You have to have the light? If you ever have an opportunity to visit Carlsbad Caverns, you may remember that those are caverns that are deep underground, where the best like to live, and they have magnificent structures that have been eroded out over the years. In years past, there was a little area where benches had been placed, and the ranger who was guiding you around would ask everybody to sit down. Then he would say, "Just to show you what it's like down here without these lights that we have installed, we're going to turn the lights out for a minute (just for a minute). So, everybody be seated. And then they turn the lights out. And you've heard of not being able to see you hand in front of your face? Boy, you can't see your hand in front of your face. Because the bats were blind, they didn't mind it. But it was dark, and there was no way that you could see. You had eyes, and you knew your eyes could see. You knew your vision was capable of seeing. But without enlightenment, you couldn't see. You can't see in the dark. Then after a minute, they'd put the light on, and everybody would "Ooh" and "Ahh" about how frightening that experience had been.

I would hate to be down in the bowels of Carlsbad Caverns and for the electrical system to go out. Can you imagine crawling on your hands and knees on that path, trying to get a glimmer of light somewhere with all those potential drop-off places along the way? That is frightening. But how many Christians go through life blind as a bat in spirit; in darkness; and, born-again, but in their carnality, their blind; they have no divine discernment; they think all is well with them; and, they're investing their lives in a rat hole instead of making it count for eternity.

So, there Laodiceans did not walk by means of the Holy Spirit. He's the teacher and he's the light. Consequently, they had no spiritual understanding.

In 1 Corinthians 2:14, the apostle Paul says, "The natural man (that's the unsaved person) does not accept the things of the Spirit of God." Your unsaved relatives are not receptive to the gospel of the grace of God. They're not receptive to the moral code of Scripture. They're not receptive to the authority of God in their lives. They are often not even receptive that God is actually there. The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him; that is, to his benighted intellect. He cannot understand these spiritual things because they are spiritually appraised or examined. If you don't have the enlightenment and the Holy Spirit, you can't see the truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ has condemned these Laodicean Christians. But please be careful that you understand why it is that He has condemned them. He has condemned them for their spiritual poverty. He has not condemned them for their material wealth. Don't make that false connection. There's nothing wrong with being financially well off in life. Any time I'm walking down the street, I carefully watch the sidewalk to find a winning ticket in the lottery. There's nothing wrong with God's blessing, because He's going to do that. You're faithful; you walk with Him; you're His friend; you're a person after His Own Heart; you're never going to out-give him; and, remember that only what's sent ahead – that's where your real wealth is.

So, God does not condemn these Laodiceans because they were rich. He condemns them because their material wealth had blinded their spiritual lives. That's the difference.

**Those Whom I Love**

OK. Verse 19: Having said all this to them, the time has come to repent. This is where eventually every Christian has to come when you are out of the will of God in whatever respect. Until you get back on track, your train is not going to go anywhere. So verse 19 says, "Those whom I love," referring to a certain group of humanity. This group of humanity are those who are in the family of God. They are the brothers and sisters of Christ. In the Greek Bible, the word "I" is in this place listed separately. Sometimes is just part of the verb, but here is listed separately. And when that happens, that's to emphasize that this is the attitude of Almighty God. That makes it important: "I, the Lord Jesus Christ, a member of the Godhead of the Holy Trinity – I, the God-man; or, I, the manifest member of the Trinity.

**You Will See the Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven**

You won't see God in heaven, and you won't see the Holy Spirit, but you will see the God-man Jesus Christ. Therefore, He is a very special person. He says that He, as a special person, has an attitude toward those Laodicean Christians because they're part of the family of God.

**Christ Loves Us**

And He says, "He loves them. And it's important which word for "love" is here. This word is "phileo." The word that people are more often acquainted with for love is the word "agapao." "Agapao" is the word for the love up in the head – a mental attitude. You love people on the basis of who they are. They are the creation of God. They're made in His image, no matter how they have turned out as human beings, they're nevertheless not animals. You have a mental attitude goodwill and desire for their blessing. And you would not want to do them any injury. This is not the word which is here. Here in Revelation 3:19 it's the word 'phileo," and that is the word for love of an emotional kind.

Isn't that interesting? Jesus says, "I really have an emotional attachment. It's not just the fact that I esteem you as members of My family for whom I have died and for whom I saved, but I have an emotional attachment for you." This is unusual, in the New Testament, to use this emotional Word of God's love for man. It's only done twice, where God says, "I'm emotionally attracted to you." You would expect this on a human level. You would expect this – that a man would say to a woman, or a man to a woman, "I have an emotional attachment to you."

There's only one other place that this word is used of God's love, and that's John 16:27: "For the Father Himself loves you ('phileo')." That's the word – His emotional attachment: "You have loved me." That's the same word again: "You have an emotional attachment to me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father." The Father Himself as an emotional attraction to you.

Now, a parent may have a son or a daughter who turns out to be a real bozo; to be a really offensive; and, who knows how disappointing in whatever way. Yes, there's that mental attitude sense of well-being and desire to do good for this unlovely creature. But there is an emotional attachment for this child, in his worst conditions; in his more horrendous lifestyle; and, in his most offensive way. You get emotional over what he does, or what she does, and what they're doing to themselves. You get emotional over that. That's the kind of love that our Heavenly Father is saying to the Laodiceans. It's not only that I disapprove of you, but it *really* upsets me. It really grieves me emotionally to see you. You are a local body of believers, and I've blessed you with material things beyond what is generally the case of other churches, which are only within a small circle of you, to whom I'm writing these same letters. None of them have the good life that you have, and yet you're the worst of the lot spiritually. And that upsets Me.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ (the God-man) has an emotional affection for these reversionistic, Laodicean believers. And it's the present tense, which means it's the constant attitude that Christ has for this part of the body of Christ. These Laodiceans are also part of the bride of Christ. And it's active voice, which means this is a personal feeling of love. He feels for these people. He has a pity for them. It's a statement of the true feeling of God.

These reversionistic Laodicean believers are the objects of the Lord's emotional attachment because of what God's grace has done for them, and could do. That's what's upsetting. That's what's upsetting for somebody that you see who grows up with great spiritual opportunity, and with great instruction in the Word of God, and with great understanding of the cautions of what the world is like, and what the dangers are of the sin nature in us, and how Satan goes around like a lion, waiting to pounce upon us, and how God's Word cannot be broken. Jesus said it; it is true; and, experience demonstrates it.

So, when you break the moral code, you can't get away with it. You cannot do it without grievous consequences. So, whose heart would not go out to somebody who could be something really special, and then degenerate into the kinds of things that the Laodiceans held in esteem? Or someone even more painful emotionally that really was somebody, and that was highly esteem, and then to see that person go into a tailspin. And if that person does not come out of the tailspin, he will crash.

In the early days, when people were first learning to fly, when they would stall out an airplane, one wing would drop off, and the thing would begin circulating down into a tailspin. And they would make the mistake of pulling the stick back, which tightened them in the spiral. Eventually, somebody figured out what you do is that you put the stick forward, and kick the opposite rudder to stop the rotation, and have the plane going down, so it was picking up speed, and then gradually it will stop rotating. You pull it up. If you do not, you will corkscrew right into the ground. And it's an exciting thing to do.

One day I decided that I wanted to be sure I knew how to get out of a tailspin. So, I took the little plane up to 3,000 feet, and pulled it up till the nose was straining and straining, and then kicked one rudder, and it fell off on that wing, and boy, it was tightening. Then I put that stick forward, and kicked that opposite rudder, and all of a sudden it straightened out. You have to be careful not to pull too fast. You might leave your wings behind in the process of pulling out. But it is a "Six Flags over Texas" ride.

So, I went up and tried it one more time, and that was all. Fortunately, I never had to do that (in real time). But you need to know how to get out of the tail spin.

So many Christians don't know what to do when they become sinners. They don't know where the right track is; how to repent; how to confess; and, how to go on in life after that. These reversionistic people were a great, broken-heart situation for the Lord. He did not love these people, because of their efforts to be nice. Some people think if they're just nice, sociable people, they'll be loved by God. They were loved by Jesus Christ in spite of the fact that they were not nice people in what they were doing. What God loves is His Own absolute righteousness.

These reversionistic Laodiceans had the undergarments of absolute righteousness on them. The perfect justice of God had been imputed to them. Their destiny was heaven, but they had fallen into terrible carnality, and when you stay in the carnality, and you don't pull out of it, then you go into revisionism, where the whole life rapidly degenerates. That's the answer when something happens to somebody overnight, and you say, "What in the world happened?" Just a few weeks ago, this was a splendid person. Look at him now!

Well, what he didn't do was get out of the carnality, and make things straight with God and confess. And the result was that it tightened into reversionism, and their positional sanctification is still there, but their experiential sanctification went down the tube. These Laodiceans, then, in short, thought they were special with the Lord because they were refined, and they were cultured. They were people who knew good manners in their ways. And they were very sincere in their religious activity. But they were devoted first to themselves, not to the Lord.

So, no matter how debased we Christians may become, Jesus Christ has a deep emotional attachment to us. We are part of Himself. And He says, "Therefore, because I have this great feeling for you," in verse 19: "Those whom I love in this emotional way, I will also reprove." The word in the Greek Bible, so we know what the Holy Spirit is saying, is "elegcho." This means to reprove in such a way as to bring a person under the conviction of error. It is more than simple criticism. It is more than this censure. It means that God hits you in some way so that you are crushed with the conviction. You are crushed with a sense of guilt. You are crushed with the awareness of how far you have stepped out of line. And that's good. He is not going to let His sheep wander off into self-destruction without reaching out, with the shepherd's crook, and putting around their neck, and giving him a jerk on the chain to pull them back in. And you can shove that thing off and go your way. That's true. But you will not do it without his effort to preserve you from that disaster. It means to reprove in such a way as to bring under conviction. This is what he constantly does. It's the Lord Jesus Christ who brings this conviction of sin about, and it connotes influencing people with words and with thoughts. This is part of the job that is placed upon a pastor-teacher,

**Reproof**

In 2 Timothy 4:2, the apostle Paul says, "Preach the Word." That's expository explanation – not just the English, but from what's behind the English: "Be ready in season and out of season." That means be ready to preach the Word when the chairs are filled in the auditorium, and when the chairs are sparsely filled in the auditorium – when people really are receptive; or, when they are indifferent. You do not adjust to their response. You adjust to what they need in the Word of God. Along with this: "You reprove." There's the word: "elegcho." You reprove this person so as to bring that person under conviction of error. You rebuke. You exhort. You do all this with great patience and instruction. But sometimes you and I have to go to another Christian, and say, "Let's get it straight. This is out of order – what you're doing. This is not the will of God." And if they will listen, you have saved them from a lot of heartache, and a lot of discipline. If they will not listen, at least you will have the comfort of knowing that you did put a hand out, and tried to stop them from what they were about to do.

The Holy Spirit does not let His people get away with error; with evil; or, with rebellion. The Holy Spirit makes believers aware of their negative volition to God's divine viewpoint thinking. The question of the response is up to the individual. We are our own priests. Whether some Christian comes to you and says, "I see what you're doing, and I want to tell you this. If you do that, sometimes I can see it on the faces of people, when all I'm doing is explaining something that is out of line for a Christian's lifestyle. And bingo! This hits some person who does those things. This is their way. The old saying used to be that the preacher has then stopped preaching and started meddling. What they mean is that you're trying to make me do it your way. No, I'm trying to make you do it God's way.

So, he says, "Explain the Word of God, and explain it in such a way that the person cannot just blow it off. But if you're a person such as I am, who wants everybody to love me, and who wants everybody to really be nice to me, then you won't say anything. You'll just let them blunder off, because they will not like you, and they will let you know that they wish you'd mind your own business. But their lives are our business. Parents should understand that this is what they have to tell their children, and it gets harder when they're older, because now they're on their own. But they still have to be reproved.

So, the Lord said, "Those whom I have an emotional attachment for, I will bring you under conviction that what you're doing is wrong. And I cannot bless you in that kind of a position. And the result will be that, if you continue, then I will discipline." The word "discipline" like this in the Greek: "paideuo." "Paideuo" means "I will train you." "Paideuo means "instruction." This is what a teacher does. She's a pedagog. We get this word from that. She gives instruction to the child. She gives training to the child. And here it refers to God saying, "Because I have a deep feeling for you, I'll start inflicting evil and calamities into your life. I'll bring pressure. I will begin to pull things apart in your life. I'll begin to put the bite on you. And I will raise the degree and the intensity of that discipline until you decide to come back to where you should be, and to yield." Now, I think that it is dumb to put yourself under such a disastrous treatment at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, He says, "You get to the point where I'm disciplining you. And you know it. You know very well when things are in a very miserable mode." He says, "I love you, and I'll discipline you." And what you should do about that is that you should be zealous in your response. The word "zealous" looks like this: "zeleuo." "Zeleuo" comes from the word that means "to boil." Remember what he said? You Laodiceans, you're neither icy cold (unsaved), nor are you boiling hot (at the other end of the spectrum) of spiritual Christians. You're right in the center: insipid; or, lukewarm. Therefore: "You make Me sick. You make Me nauseous. You make Me want to vomit you out of My mouth," meaning cut you off from blessing.

So, He says, "Get hot. Get with it. This connotes getting hot for something such that you get out of reversionism. This is to be done constantly. The desire of a Christian should be to get out of walking away from divine blessing, and get back on track. It's active voice. You have to do it. But I have to tell you one other thing, folks. Now we get to a word which is not just an indicative, statement-of-fact invitation. This is imperative mood. That means that it's a divine commandment. You understand what that's saying? "Those whom I have an emotional attachment for, I will bring under strong conviction, and I will discipline (I will train you) in the direction that you should go to correct this. And you should be zealous for this. I'm commanding you to be zealous for this. And if you do not, I'm going to bring the roof down on your head. You do not walk in the family of God, and thumb your nose at the character of our Father. You do not thumb your nose at the good name of the local church congregation that you're a part of. Be zealots for correcting. The Laodiceans were condemned because they were not zealous, and they were not boiling hot to be spiritually mature Christians.

So, now they're called upon to abandon being lukewarm (reversionism), and to embrace with a hot zeal the will of God, to abandon the self-delusion which has made them spiritually wretched, poor, naked, and blind. What he is saying is: "Build up your spiritual maturity structure."

Now depending how far you've let it degenerate, it's going to take time to get back up to where you are a stable, mature Christian, where you can walk and take things in stride in life, where God will again trust you. He will again say, "You're a man after My Own Heart; or, you're a woman after My Own Heart. I will trust you with My Mission, and My People, and their lives, and their well-being. It'll take a while before He's going to say, "I'll trust you again when I know that your heart is the same as My Heart." And this means getting back to spiritual maturity. And it takes time to do that.

"Be zealous, therefore. Get hot. Get with it, therefore, in view of the potential discipline of God." The principle of discipline is 1 Corinthians 11:31. The apostle says, "If we judge ourselves rightly, we should not be judged." Got it? If you correct yourself, then God will not come in. But if you insist on not correcting, and coming back in line, then He will raise the level of the pressure, and it will get worse and worse. And the price of carnality, folks, is never worth it – the kinds of things you can get into.

Every now and then, we receive letters in the tape ministry. For several years, we received one from a young man who's in a prison in Missouri. And you can see the sorrow and the pathos. He has come to know the Lord. He has come to understand what he did, and the price he's paying with the loss of his freedom. And somehow, by the grace of God, in that particular prison library, Berean tapes are on hand to be checked out. When he got that, talk about a means to recidivism (which means "coming back again" to prison for continuing a crime again). It is always a spiritual matter. It is a spiritual problem that has to be solved. And if that's not solved, then there's no way for the person to get the life back on track.

So, here is this young fella who would write these long letters to me, and they were very pointed – his gratitude for this congregation that would be willing to pay for these tapes that give him what God thinks. And he took it, and has run with it. And he has been the agent of distributing the Word of God to other people who are inmates there. When that happens – when you become a person that reflects the fact that you understand the ways of God, and that you are a person who is zealous for the Word of God, people will find that out. And when they have a difficulty they'll come to you and say, "Would you pray for this? Would you explain this to me? Would you help me in this way?"

Jack Smith called me recently. He said that his wife was approached at work by a man. And he said to her, "Your husband studies the Bible, right." She said, "That's about all he does." Then he said, "Could you have him give me an explanation on how to go to heaven?" Now how would you like someone to come up and say that to you? And he said, "You tell him I'll make a tape for him, and I'll explain it. You take it home, and can think it through." And Jack said, "This is the way I witness to people. I don't get up in the morning and say, 'God, I'm going to talk to four people today about the Lord." Some churches would like to use a gimmick. But Jack says, "Sir, I am here for your disposal, and I'm ready to witness, or to explain the things of the Spirit of God as you give me people who are ready to receive this message.'" He said, "I find that when the Lord sends me to somebody, I recognize it. Maybe it's the girl that is checking me out at the checkout counter, who will say something to me. That is amazing – how she would ever say such a thing of a spiritual nature to this total stranger." And he'll say, "Yes, I can help you with that, and I'll get back with you."

This is the way, when people are on track with the Word of God, they will trust you, because that's their life that they're dealing with. And they're not going to trust it to some religious yo-yo who's in it for the money. But when we judge ourselves, we don't have to take the carnality judgments. It's never worth it.

So, He says, "Get hot, therefore, and repent." The word "repent" looks like this in the Bible: "Metanoeo." This is non-emotional! It does not mean to start blubbering, and crying, and carrying on before God. "Metanoeo" is one of the easy Greek words, and we know what it means. It means "to change your mind." The Scripture says, "From dead idols to the living God." That's "metanoeo:" "This just dumb idol over here – it's nothing. I'm not going to worship it anymore. The living God is everything. My worship and my trust goes to Him. I've changed my mind about this jerk, and I'm going to go to this gem – the living God."

**Repent**

People have taken this, and they hit hard on: "First you must repent, before you can be saved. If you don't repent, you can't be saved." By that, they mean to get emotionally high, so that God will say, "OK, I'll go ahead and save you." Please remember that you cannot repent without changing your mind. Therefore, the only way you can repent is if you do one thing, and that is if you *believe the gospel*. It's two sides of the same coin. When you believe the gospel (that Christ died for your sins, and that your faith in Him, accepting that gift), you will go to heaven; all moral guilt has been covered; and, you will come into the family of God, you have changed your mind about saving yourself; about false idols; and, about everything else in the world. And you have changed your mind to go to the living God. You cannot repent without believing the gospel.

Now, these Laodiceans are to change their minds, in their case, not about their salvation issue, but about their self-estimate. They thought really highly of themselves. They thought they were really hot stuff. They were cultured. They were fine. They wore nice clothes. They knew important people. They rubbed shoulders with the people who were socially prominent. And their life was filled with good things and fun. They thought that they were something. But John says, "Repent." This is a decision at some point in time where they admit their loathsome lifestyle; their carnality; and, they changed their mind about it, and say, "I'm going to walk the spiritual walk with Christ. I'm going to walk with my Father."

This word "metanoeo" is active voice. That means that they have to do this personally. They have to take this step. And again, I must tell you that there is no option. This is another command. This is imperative mood. God says, "I now command you to change your mind. You stop this carnal lifestyle. You stop this lifestyle. You've let carnality go, so you're now in the lower (worse) stage of reversionism. Everything is coming apart. You're getting more blinded every day about what spiritual reality. And I am commanding you, as your Lord, to stop it, and to change your mind about the life that you've been living."

The Laodiceans are being told that they have to begin a program of recovery from reversionism, and to restore the spiritual maturity structure. Every relationship of life is based upon a spiritual factor: the devil's world; or, God's world.

**The War in Iraq**

All of us are keeping our eyes and ears open on Iraq. We are now beginning to hear the first glimmers of people who are saying: "Iraq cannot be a Muslim theocracy." That bodes well. They say, "Iraq cannot be a country like Saudi Arabia, where no other religion is permitted. And if you convert from Islam to Christianity, you will be executed. There will not be," we're told, "a Muslim theocracy in Iraq." If they do not preserve the opportunity for the conscience of people to make their choice, and to change your mind from Muhammad, and Allah, and Islam to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Heavenly Creator, and the Word of God of Christianity, then we have not accomplished anything in the war in Iraq. And the mullahs are all lining up as fast as they can – the religious leaders – those who will be in charge of the nation like they are in Iran, and like they are in Saudi Arabia, so that they can impose the laws of Sharia, which are the laws of Satan out of the Koran. And there is brutal treatment of people, conquest by the sword, who will not submit to Islam.

**Freely-Chosen Repentance**

Repentance has to be freely chosen. But if you're a child of God, you can sin, but you will not be permitted to continue in it. And the sorrow for some Christians will be very great if they do not repent. Repentance may be accompanied by an emotional attitude. Some Christians might have an emotional attitude of sorrow in the process of repenting. But their emotion is not the repentance. The repentance is your change of mind. You decide that God is right. You know what the course of action is. You know how you should be conducting yourself. You know what God expects of you, and what you should do, and you proceed to do that.

Now, if your sorrow comes in (and very often, that will happen), and if you've gone far enough, you might even find that there are now consequences that you can't leave behind. There are consequences that you can't just put aside. There are always before you. There are always with you.

**Sorrow**

2 Corinthians 7:8-11 tie this together for us. Paul says, "For though I caused you sorrow by my letter." He was calling this church down for terrible carnality which was existing in the Corinthian church. He did that in the first letter, where there was incest, and moral sins going on, and nobody was sounding off against it: "Though I call it your sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it, for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a little while." Paul said, "I did not want to make you be suffering in grief." But now he says, "I rejoice. Not that you were made sorrowful (that's not going to change anything), but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance. For you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us." He says, "OK, you got emotional. You felt terrible about it. You had this very grievous feeling, but you did change your mind. *Your feeling sorry is not the change.* But deciding to go back on the track of God – that's the change:" "For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation. For the sorrow of the world produces death."

A thief is sorry because he was caught, not because he stole. That's the difference: "For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging is wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter." Paul is saying, "The results have been good from your sorrow, though it wasn't that I wanted to make you suffer emotionally, but it turned out for good."

**The Sin unto Death**

So, the Laodicean Christians are told to secure the goal of Bible doctrine in their human spirits, and to put on the white garments of experiential sanctification (walking the godly life), and to apply the eye salve of spirituality to see God's will (walking in temporal fellowship). There is a daily need for us, and a daily judgment we have to make. You do not want to get frozen into a routine of life that leaves no room for God to say, "Here's where you are now, and here's where I want you to go, and here are the plans I have for you as My servant." Failure to do this will result in the steps of chastening. First there will be warning, then there'll be pressure, and possibly death. When carnality goes into the depths of revisionism, you will be taken home to heaven.

The very existence of the Laodicean congregation here was on the line, because there were so many of them, and they all encouraged one another to be the country-club type in their revisionism. So, it is very important to know what the Bible teaches; to conform to it; and, to avoid the need for divine discipline. You should, here, be able to do that.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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