



Lesson 2: Repentance

Psalm 120 (The Message)

- 1-2 I'm in trouble. I cry to God,
desperate for an answer:
"Deliver me from the liars, God!
They smile so sweetly but lie through their teeth."
- 3-4 Do you know what's next, can you see what's coming,
all you barefaced liars?
Pointed arrows and burning coals
will be your reward.
- 5-7 I'm doomed to live in Meshech,
cursed with a home in Kedar,
My whole life lived camping
among quarreling neighbors.
I'm all for peace, but the minute
I tell them so, they go to war!

I. Lies Without Error

The distress that begins and ends the song is the painful awakening that the no-longer avoidable reality is that we have been lied to. The world is a lie for the way it presents itself. Things are not all right as they are, and they are not getting any better.

These lies are actually very factual. They don't have any errors. But they are lies just the same, because they claim to tell us who we are and omit everything about our origin in God and our destiny in God. They talk about the world without telling us about that God who made it. They tell us about our bodies without telling us we are temples of the Holy Spirit. They instruct us in love without telling us about the God who loves us and gave Himself for us!

II. Lightning Illuminating The Crossroads

The word God is found only twice in this Psalm, but it is the clue to understanding it. God who is seen in His redemptive work exposes all the lies. The truth for us Christians is that Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross for our sins and raised from the tomb for our salvation and that we can participate in new life as accept his mercy, respond to his love by keeping His

commandments. The Psalmist's "God" is a lightning flash illuminating for us a crossroads. Psalm 120 is a decision to choose one way against the other.

III. A No Is A Yes

The first step toward God is a step away from the lies of the world. Those lies that we have been told about ourselves and our neighbors. The bible word that we use to say "no" to the world's lies and "yes" to God's truth is, repentance. It is the first word in the Christian life.

John the Baptist preached, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2) Jesus preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17) Peter concluded his preaching in Acts 2:38 with "Repent, and be baptized." In the last book of the bible the message to the seventh church is "be zealous and repent" (Revelation 3:19).

Repentance is the realization that what God wants from you and what you want from God cannot be achieved by doing the same old things and thinking the same old thoughts. Repentance is the decision to follow Jesus Christ and to become his pilgrim in the path of peace that leads to heaven.

We don't have to be doomed to live among this world filled with lies and violence. Repentance is the first word in setting us on the path toward peace. It is a rejection that is also an acceptance. A leaving that develops into an arriving. A "no" to the world and sin and a "yes" to God and grace!

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." (Acts 5:29-32)