

Cell Outlines

Week beginning: 25th September 2005

Theme: Repentance from 'Dead Works'

Welcome: Have you ever got involved with a job at work (or home) or came up with a 'bright idea' that didn't quite materialise or that went 'belly up'? Do you dare admit this to your cell? Maybe you could explain a bit about the situation. Or have you ever been on a 'wild goose chase'? Discuss briefly!

Introduction: The first thing necessary to be right with God is for an unbeliever is to repent from their sin. The second is to believe in Jesus Christ as God's remedy for their sin. Once we are 'born again' one of the first things we have to do as Christian is to 'repent from dead works'. (N.B. The New International Version of Hebrews 6:1 uses the phrase 'acts that lead to death'. The Greek actually says 'nekron ergon' which literally translated means 'dead works'. This is a little known biblical fact, which we can look at now.

Word/ Teaching Slot - What are Dead Works?

Key Scriptures: Hebrews 6:1; John 16:13-15; John 14:23-24; Ephesians 2:10

There are two categories of dead works:

(i) Everything that we did before we were converted

This includes the sins or works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) and the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). It can even include church attendance, giving money to the poor and religious ritualism whereby we think we can earn God's favour. In actual fact our acceptance with God is only on the basis of His grace working through our faith in Him, which is His gift to us anyway! (Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5). Once we have put our total trust in Jesus, our consciences can be completely renewed and we can put an end to dead works in order that we might serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14).

(ii) Everything that is void of the life of God in our service for God

- Examples from Scripture include:
- The church at Sardis which had a reputation for being alive but actually was dead (Revelation 3:1-2).
 - David numbering the fighting men of Israel and 70,000 died because he put his trust in the wrong thing (2 Samuel 24:10),
 - Moses killing the Egyptian; which was false zeal (Exodus 2:11-12).

So many Christians stay as spiritual babies because they would rather take and not give. They are not willing to have the discipline of life to wait upon the Lord for Him to show them what to do through His Word and in prayer. Many may even hear God, but are unwilling to step out in faith in line with what they hear (Romans 10:17). God is looking for those who will grow in maturity in Him. He is looking for spiritual fathers, people that others can look to and imitate because of their faith, obedience and godliness (1 Corinthians 4:15-16). We need to fully yield our lives over to our loving heavenly Father and trust Him, looking to Him for direction and guidance and obeying Him when He asks us to do something for Him. Removing dead works prepares the way for good foundations so that we can go on building towards maturity. Then we will not stay as spiritual babies but will grow and learn how to know what God would do in any situation, and beyond this, we will actually do as He asks us. We do not do this alone, as we have the Holy Spirit to help us every step of the way. We need to build relationship with Him, the Counsellor, and learn to trust Him.

Questions and Discussion Points

1. Why could a lack of repentance in any area of our lives lead to a falling away from a truth God has revealed to us and that we have received?
2. Why do we need to have a hatred of sin? Discuss.
3. Why did Zacchaeus do what he did in Luke 19:8?
4. Why are so many Christians still like spiritual babies, always asking and taking but never giving? Discuss.
5. Are there any disciples of Jesus that you know that you could imitate? Why did you choose these people? (Hebrews 13:7; Hebrews 6:12).

Witness & Worship combined! Here is a suggestion for you to possibly try. Play a worship CD or gentle music and quietly consider the following:

1. Are there any dead works you need to repent of, i.e. Those things which you think you can earn God's favour by doing?
2. Are there any areas in your life that you know are not what God wants and yet you're still hanging on to them?

Did you know that your 'witness' is a love response to God's goodness - not a chore to earn 'brownie points'! In the light of that who could you have the privilege of sharing this good news with in the next week. Pray for an opportunity to do so.