

**Sermon Notes of  
Elder Larry Omasta's Sermon on August 30, 2020:**

**"Guilt Verses Godly Sorrow  
(2 Corinthians 7:8-10)"**

**[In today's sermon, Elder Larry Omasta on Zoom shows the dramatic difference between godly sorrow verses worldly sorrow.]**

Introduction:

- In his series on the Gospel of John, Pastor Craig recently covered an interesting topic of guilt and shame verses grace from John 18.
- This topic reminded Larry of a verse in 2 Corinthians where the apostle Paul contrasted Godly sorrow with worldly sorrow.
- So, he did some study on this topic that he would like to share with everyone today.
  
- It's a very interesting subject with many aspects to it.
- The title of today's message is "Guilt Verses Godly Sorrow".
- So, let's start off by reading the scripture. The first couple of verses are background as to the key point Paul said in verse 10.

**2 Cor. 7:8 (NIV), Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it – I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while – 9) yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.**

- The early church fathers intensely looked for this earlier letter that Paul wrote, but couldn't find it.
- This missing letter was probably short and very critical of their behavior, so the Corinthians probably thrashed the letter.
- But obviously, the letter made a good impact on the Corinthians.

**10) Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow (caused by guilt) brings death.**

**JB Phillips, 10) The sorrow which God uses means a change of heart and leads to salvation – it is the world's sorrow that is such a deadly thing.**

- Let's go back and read verses 9 & 10 again.

**9 (NIV), For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10) Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow (caused by guilt) brings death.**

- Typically, society today views repentance as, "to feel sorrow, to have regrets or contrition for an act one did."
- But the Greek word for repentance really means: turning around, a change of mind.
- Here Paul stresses that worldly sorrow is not repentance.

- Only Godly sorrow gives us repentance. This sorrow is from God, produced by the Holy Spirit.
- This is so important to understand. True sorrow comes from God to us through His inspiration. And godly sorrow gives us true repentance.
- We need to realize that godly sorrow is a gift from God to us.

#### True repentance:

- So you could say, to repent means to turn away from evil and return to God.
- Repentance not only means a radical break from one's former lifestyle, but a positive commitment to seek and experience God in our lives.
- By contrast, a worldly sorrow is not really sorrow for the sin or wrongdoing committed or for the hurt it may have caused others.
- The sorrow of this world regrets that a person's wrong doing has been brought out for others see.
- Worldly sorrow is also not sorrow due to the awefulness of the wrongdoing, but it's sorrow because of the painful and unwelcome consequences of the sinful act.
- Thus, the sorrow of the world displays itself in self-pity rather than in contrition for the evil deed done.
- If the person got the chance to do the same thing again and thought he/she could escape the consequences, he/she would do it again.
- Now a godly sorrow is a sorrow which comes to see the wrongness and evil of the thing we did. Godly sorrow helps us to detest what we did was wrong and to hate that sin and then turn to God in repentance.
- It's interesting to note that ultimately, God transforms our godly sorrow into godly joy – the joy is of God's salvation and the peace He gives to us, when we come back to Him.

#### Guilt and shame:

- Now, guilt and shame are the result of worldly sorrow, which can often turn into depression.
- Guilt is universal, striking people of all ages everywhere. No is exempt, not even Christians.
- Sooner or later, in some place, at some time, the feelings of guilt arise and leaving its victims in pain.
- Guilt feels so deep and can cause physical pain.
- In a survey of one thousand people of varying backgrounds from across the nation, guilt was found to be their greatest emotional problem.
- What do people feel guilty about? Anything and everything.
- We feel guilty about not spending more time with our children, about eating the wrong kinds of food, about getting angry, and the list goes on and on.
- And as Christians we feel guilty about our sinful actions.
- And often, we don't feel that we've been forgiven by God for what we just recently done.
- We, as Christians, do wrong things and then suffer from guilt.
- And guilt is one of the greatest enemies to our faith.

- But, God will help us to see that faith will win the victory over guilt and shame when we give up trying to control everything in our lives.
- Our motto for Grace Communion Monrovia is “Loving God and Loving Others without fear, shame, guilt or doubt.” This should have deep meaning for us.
- Pastor Craig was truly inspired when he gave this to us.

- While godly sorrow results in positive, life-affirming changes, guilt results in the destruction of self and our relationships with others.
- Now let’s take a look at eight distinctions between godly sorrow and guilt.

1. Godly sorrow focuses on the other person.

- Guilt is a selfish emotion. When people feel guilty they focus on themselves exclusively.
- Their pains from guilt are so great that they cannot begin to acknowledge the pain of the people they have hurt.
- Now, we’ve all hurt others, but we’re not always aware of what we’ve done.
- Godly sorrow, in contrast, allows people to look beyond their own pain and enter the world of the person they have offended.
- (Now we have to realize not every bad thing we do hurts others. But, most of us, one time or another, have deeply offended others either by our actions or what we said to them.)
- Normally, when we get hurt by others, we want to get even with them. But, usually we hurt them worse than what they’ve done to us.

2. Godly sorrow recognizes pain as only a part of the healing process.

- Godly sorrow looks beyond the pain of the moment to the greater goal of healing a broken relationship.
- It cares about making a wrong right.
- Self-absorbed guilt, on the other hand, refuses to go through the pain required to heal a relationship.
- It’s interesting to note that godly sorrow motivates us to reach out to others.

3. Godly sorrow looks forward to the future.

- People troubled by feelings of guilt do not care about or plan for the future.
- Obsessed with the history of their failures, they cry over situations that cannot be changed.
- Instead of driving with their eyes on the road ahead of them, they continually look behind them.
- Godly sorrow, on the other hand, looks to the future.
- It keeps the eye trained on the road ahead, with only quick glances behind to prevent accidents.
- Godly sorrow helps people turn their back on the past and start planning their future.
- Godly Sorrow does not obsess over the way things might have been.

- It does not revel in regrets.
- Godly Sorrow envisions the better life we can have following the guidance of Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

#### 4. Godly sorrow motivates us to change and grow.

- People who are plagued by feelings of guilt will do anything to make themselves feel better.
- But often their attempts at change do not last long. As soon as they feel the burden of guilt lift, they are back to their old destructive patterns of behavior.
- Godly sorrow, on the other hand, motivates us to make long – lasting needed changes in our behavior and attitude.
- Guilt brings us back to where we began in an endless cycle of bad behavior and shallow repentance.
- Godly sorrow, on the other hand, motivates us to make long-lasting changes that, although maybe painful, can break the cycle of guilt and sinful behavior.

#### 5. Godly sorrow is a choice; it is not coerced.

- God knows that He can't coerce a genuine confession out of us.
- Through His Spirit, God gently leads us to a realization of our wrongdoings, which enables us to confess our sins to Him, then which allows us to begin to change our behavior.
- Remember the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11)?
- After Jesus wrote their specific sins in the sand, the angry mob of Pharisees and religious leaders, who brought the woman to Jesus, fell silent and left, one by one.
- The trembling woman and Jesus were left standing together.
- Jesus asked her, "Where are they? Has no one condemned you?"
- "No one," she replied. "Then neither do I condemn you," he told her. "Go now, and leave your life of sin."
- Many believe that Jesus should have gotten her to promise to change first before pronouncing his forgiveness.
- But that's not Christ's way of responding to sin.
- Jesus did not want a coerced confession motivated by fear and the threat of punishment.
- He wanted her to choose a better way of living in order to be a better person.
- So, He encouraged her to follow a godly lifestyle and to "leave your life of sin."

#### 6. Godly sorrow relies on God's mercy.

- When we relate to God out of a guilty conscience, we try to earn our worth by being severely critical of ourselves.
- Rather than relying on God's mercy, we struggle to show God we deserve mercy.
- A sense of inadequacy drives us to prove that we are deserving of God's forgiveness.

- But, relying on godly sorrow, on the other hand, allows us to fully accept and experience God's forgiveness, which he gives to us by His mercy.
- We need to rely upon and completely rest in the gift of God's amazing grace.

7. Godly sorrow gives us a positive attitude.

- When we feel guilty, we have a negative attitude toward ourselves.
- We work to control and defeat guilt, and as a result, the spiritual aches and pains thrive.
- But when we feel godly sorrow, we begin to maintain respect for ourselves.
- We do not try to conquer the self. Instead we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit to begin His work in us.
- Instead of belittling ourselves, we treat ourselves in the manner of how God views and treat us – as His beloved children.
- As pastor Craig often tells us: we need to remember that our sinful actions haven't changed God's relationship with us, but it can change our relationship with Him, because we can sometimes feel cut off from Him by our actions.
- So, when we restore our relationship with God through prayer and confession, we draw ourselves back to God again.

8. Godly sorrow results in real and lasting change.

- Godly sorrow results in a true life change while guilt, at best, spins us into a cycle of temporary change followed by more self-condemnation.
- Now some of you might be saying, "But feelings of guilt do motivate me to change my behavior."
- Yes, guilt can lead to confession and change of behavior, but only in the short run.
- Motivation by guilt doesn't last long.
- Confession of guilt, in the absence of going to God and accepting His godly sorrow, short-circuits any attempt to make long-lasting life changes.
- So, it's so important to remember that having godly sorrow and then relying on the Holy Spirit results in true life-style changes.
- In doing this, we are asking God to adjust our thinking to match His.

Summary of these 8 distinctions:

	<u>Guilt Feelings</u>	(Versus)	<u>Godly Sorrow</u>
You Focus:	On one self		On the person offended
our Outlook:	toward the past		toward the future
Your Motivation:	to avoid painful feelings		to change and grow
Your Attitude toward God:	I can do it alone		I need your help

Your Attitude toward self:

frustration & condemnation      respect

Results:                      temporary change                      positive change that lasts

Concluding comments:

- Accepting forgiveness is often the most difficult step in healing guilt.
- Our conscience doesn't want to give up its power.
  
- Sometimes restitution with the one we've sinned against is not possible.
- Sometimes the offended person refuses to forgive us. But that's the person's problem not ours.
  
- If we are genuinely sorry, have honestly tried to make it right, and have sincerely asked God for forgiveness, we can be confident we are forgiven.
- But we will not rid ourselves of guilt until we take the final step of asking for and accepting forgiveness from God.
  
- The apostle John reminds us that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins' (1 John 1:9).
- What is so important is that we need to rely on God's strength to help us overcome guilt and shame.
- Humbly admit we are powerless to overcome our guilt alone, and make a decision to turn our will and life completely over to the nurturing care of God.
  
- One episode in David's life is such a good example for us.
- After the prophet Nathan came to David after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba and plotted the death of her husband Uriah.
- Nathan helped David see himself through God's eyes, and when David did that, he became heartbroken.
- All he can do now is to ask for forgiveness and the chance for a fresh start.
- His prayer is so powerful for us today.

**Psalm 51:1 (NIV), Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2) Wash away all my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**

- It's obvious that David has just confessed his sins to God and knows that God will forgive them.
- David is now looking forward to the future in his prayer.

**10) Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 12) Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.**

- What David says in his prayer can be so impactful and helpful to us when we pray to God and seek His forgiveness so we can become a willing participant to allow Him to change our actions and behavior and most importantly to change our hearts.

(Closing prayer)