

CONVERSION AND COMMITMENT

Introduction

- A. Text: **Hb. 10:23**.
- B. We live in a day when the trend is toward *continual change* rather than *constant loyalty* — toward *keeping our options open* rather than *making binding commitments*.
- C. And yet the gospel requires commitment of the highest order. Cf. **Lk. 9:57-62**.
- D. *Obedience without commitment is not really obedience*. Cf. **Mt. 6:24; 12:30**.
 - 1. Consider the serious attitude toward obedience in **Gal. 2:20**.
 - 2. To waffle or waver in our obedience is to lose the benefit of having obeyed the gospel in the first place - **Gal. 1:6; 3:1**. Cf. **Hb. 3:5,6,12-14; 10:35-39**; etc.
 - 3. We are urged to “count the cost” of discipleship to the Lord - **Lk. 14:25-33**.
- E. When we obey the gospel, seeking the remission of our sins, *each step we take must be backed up with genuine commitment*.

I. FAITH

- A. **Saving faith** is more than believing — it involves a *commitment to what we believe* - **Jas. 2:19,20**.
- B. When we say that someone has become “unfaithful” to the gospel, we don’t mean that he has ceased to “believe” that which he previously had “faith” in — we mean that he has *violated his previous pledge* to live consistently with what he believed - **2 Tim. 2:13**.
 - 1. In **1 Tim. 5:11,12**, certain widows are described as “having condemnation because they have *cast off their first faith*.”
 - 2. Cf. “because they have been *untrue to their first faith*” (Lamsa), “because they have *set aside their previous pledge*” (NASV), “because they have *broken their former promise*” (Conybeare).
 - 3. Clearly, our “faith” involves a pledge, a promise, a commitment.
- C. “Infidelity” literally means “unbelief” — but at the practical level it means a “breaking of faith,” a betrayal of trust, a going back on one’s commitment to what he believes.
- D. To renege on the commitment of our faith is a most serious thing - **2 Pt. 2:20-22**.

II. REPENTANCE

- A. **Genuine repentance** involves a *commitment to change our ways* - **Ac. 26:20**.
 - 1. “Repent” — commit to change.
 - 2. “Turn to God” — make the change.
 - 3. “Do works befitting repentance” — maintain the commitment in practice. Cf. **1 Sam. 12:20,21**.
- B. In the Bible, repentance is more than a mood, more even than the emotional “feeling” of guilt, sorrow, or remorse for our sins. Even when the sorrow is “godly sorrow,” the state of mind is only that which *leads to repentance* - **2 Cor. 7:10**.
- C. Repentance is a *change of the will* which leads to a *change of conduct*. It is a “turning” - **Rev. 2:4,5**. Cf. **Ezek. 18:23**.

- D. To be worth anything, our “turning” to God must be resolute - **Deut. 30:10**. Cf. **Josh. 1:7**; **Joel 2:12**.
- E. *Apologies* are useless if they are not backed up by a *commitment to change* - **Mt. 3:7-10**.

III. CONFESSION

- A. **Honest confession** involves a *commitment to be true to Christ* - **1 Tim. 6:12-14**.
- B. When we confess Christ, we make a pledge of faithfulness to that which we acknowledge as our belief.
 - 1. Confession is not merely an intellectual or emotional acknowledgment that Jesus is Lord, but a commitment of the *will to accept* His lordship - **Col. 2:6**.
 - 2. This commitment is made *publicly*.
 - a. Before witnesses, we place ourselves on record that we intend to be true to Christ.
 - b. Our confession is a *public promise of faithfulness*, somewhat analogous to the marriage vow.
- C. A “martyr” is a “witness” who is willing to die rather than renounce his testimony and be unfaithful to what he has confessed. Cf. Antipas, the Lord’s “faithful martyr” in **Rev. 2:13**.
- D. The New Testament speaks of “obedience” to our confession - **2 Cor. 9:13**.
- E. We must “hold fast” our confession - **Hb. 4:14**; **10:23**.

IV. BAPTISM

- A. **Scriptural baptism** involves a *commitment to walk in newness of life* - **Rom. 6:2-4**.
- B. In the New Testament, the “meaning” of baptism is two-fold: it is a *burial* to the old life . . . and a *resurrection* to the new! Understanding the second part is *no less important* than understanding that baptism is for the remission of sins.
- C. The high “infant mortality rate” among those baptized may indicate that we have not been teaching the “whole truth” about baptism. We seem to have stressed the truth about the remission of sins more than the truth about the commitment to a new life.
- D. A scriptural understanding of baptism *looks both backward and forward*:
 - 1. Backward: *the remission of past sins*.
 - 2. Forward: *a changed life, walking in newness of life*.
- E. Without a true commitment of the heart, baptism is an empty act.

Conclusion

- A. To be “converted” means to *turn to God with commitment* — not just to break with the past, but to do so *decisively!* Cf. **Ac. 3:19**.
- B. Indeed, God asks us to commit *ourselves* to Him entirely - **2 Tim. 1:12**. Cf. **2 Cor. 8:5**; **1 Pt. 4:19**.
- C. It is “foolish” to hear the truth from God and not make any commitment to it - **Mt. 7:24-27**.
- D. How “committed” is your obedience to God?
- E. How “resolved” are you to follow the Savior?