

TITLE: "Marks of the Believer's Birthright" (Part 5)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 3:11-12

THEME: *Partakers of grace give evidence of grace*

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{Read Passage}

Today we finish this section, a passage we've entitled {cite title}. We've been looking at marks/evidences of new birth or regeneration. Some of those things that would indicate the surety of one's calling and election.

At this point in the letter Peter is bringing us to a point of reassessment That's evident from the first word of verse 8 ==>

Finally, [NASB has "to sum up"]

Peter is drawing a conclusion to his thoughts from 2:11 to 3:7.

In light of these things, rest in t/fact that you are indeed one who has been called to inherit a blessing (v. 8) - eternal life.

You might recall Matthew 13

Jesus tells a series of 8 parables, one of which is t/parable of t/wheat & tares. In that parable he said ==>

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 “But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. 26 “But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. 27 “And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ 28 “And he said to them,

‘An enemy has done this!’ And the slaves *said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ 29 “But he *said, ‘No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. 30 ‘Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.”””

That parable comes right after t/parable of t/sower. Jesus tells a parable about a man broadcasting seed. Some seed goes along t/road; some among t/rocky places; some among t/thorns. But some seed falls into t/rich soil and it grows producing fruit. The seed is t/Gospel; t/soil represents t/hearts of men. Same message brings indifference; dead religiosity; and apostasy. Same seed!

Right after t/parable of t/sower/soils that Jesus tells t/parable of t/wheat & tares. Lesson is that there will always be tares among t/wheat. There will always be those who affirm t/message but their hearts are unmoved // who look like Xns & talk like Xns who in fact aren't Xns. They usually show their true colors in t/end. Such was Judas.

Judas would have been present while Jesus told these parables, lessons that applied directly to him, a tare among wheat.

BTW - Right after Jesus told t/parable of the soils, his disciples came and asked him, 'Why do you speak in parables?' His answer was direct. Jesus said ==> “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.”

That brings it all back to someone I said a few weeks ago

There's the call. Then there's conduct. The call is God's work.

It's t/call to eternal life. That call was worked out in eternity when God t/Father decreed to send God t/Son as payment for those whom He would later purchase in time. And God t/Spirit would come & quicken t/ hearts of those men & women who were spiritual corpses, so that they would believe t/Gospel & be saved. That's t/call.

But there's also conduct. BTIM - those whom God has truly called and who are converted will demonstrate that conversion by their conduct, by what they believe & how they behave.

That's not to say that we will behave perfectly. We won't. That's not to say we are saved by our works, we can't be. That's not to say that we will believe perfectly, we can't. As Calvin said, even our best is tainted w/sin. But we will evidence grace in our lives. We will continue to believe in t/purity of t/Gospel (that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone). We will hate our sin & love X's righteousness.

I. Marks of the Believer's Birthright (8-12)

A. The Mark of Love (8)

Finally, in everything be of one mind, sympathetic, brotherly love, tenderhearted, humble.

B. The Mark of Forgiveness: . . . (9a)

Love and forgiveness obviously parallel one another. Love demands that we forgive.

We'll see this later in 4:8 - **Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.**

Not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but on the other hand, giving a blessing . . .

Partakers of grace give evidence of grace. Graced people are to be gracious people.

Second half of verse 9==>

C. The Mark of God's Call . . . (9b)

. . . for you have been called for this purpose (what purpose?): so that you might inherit a blessing. You have been called to be blessed.

1. Calling and Blessing are directly connected

The call results in faith - and the blessing results in eternal life (inheritance).

2. We said that this is the determinative mark

IOW - Those whom God calls, like Jacob, will inherit t/birthright. God's call is efficacious // effective // irresistible.

Romans 8:28-30: **28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

That's what it means to be called to inherit a blessing. Nobody falls off t/wagon; nobody slips through t/cracks; nobody is left behind. Same group that's predestined is foreknown & t/same group that's justified will one day be glorified.

The mark of God's call relates to our Birthright from God's vantage point. The next mark, that of repentance, looks at it from ours.

D. The Mark of Repentance: *What is my Direction?* (10-11)

Another way to put this would be "What do I Deny? Dethrone? Disallow?" As promised last week, we're going to spend t/majority of our time on this point. A very convicting point. Take a look at your neighbor (right /left) make sure he or she isn't going to bolt. If he does, we have undercover security ready to block t/doors.

1. Note the first word of verse 10

For . . .

a. "For" what?

8 Finally, in everything be of one mind, sympathetic, brotherly love, tenderhearted, humble. 9 Not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but on the other hand, giving a blessing; for you have been called for this purpose: so that you might inherit a blessing.

10 For, HE WHO WISHES TO LOVE LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT. 11 AND LET HIM TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; LET HIM SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT. 12 FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE UPON THE RIGHTEOUS AND HIS EARS [OPEN] TO THEIR PRAYER. BUT HIS FACE IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.

2. We noted last time that Peter is quoting Psalm 34

Psa. 34 (33rd Psa. in LXX) - Psalm of David.

a. Background to the Psalm is the events of 1 Samuel 21

David, on the run from King Saul, goes to Gath in t/land of t/Philistines. He is not given a friendly reception & so, in fear for his life, he pretends to be insane. Escapes w/his life. Psa. 34 is a reflection on God's deliverance.

3. Why does Peter quote Psalm 34?

Because he was moved by God to quote it! Helps him make his point. He seems to like t/34th Psa. About 8 quotes/allusions to Psa. 34 in 1 Peter.

10 For, HE WHO WISHES TO LOVE LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.

a. What "life" and what "good days?"

Here's an imp./essential difference.

(1) When Peter says ==>

HE WHO WISHES TO LOVE LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS . . .

He's largely looking at life and good days within t/context of eternal life. (cf. 3:7 for same use). So, if you want to love life and see good days, you will act like t/blessed people you are, and if you don't act like that, you're not called.

I. Marks of the Believer's Birthright (8-12)

Partakers of grace give evidence of grace. Graced people are to be gracious people.

If you are a believer, you will work at being disciplined in what you say. You will keep your tongue from speaking evil.

(2) The connection goes back to verse 9 {read}

Not only v. 9, but to t/greater context {note 2:12; 22}.

4. Don't put the cart before the horse

a. This is not : "works salvation" or "works and grace" salvation

There are all kinds of heresies & perversions of t/Gospel which say, "*Oh, no! It's not by grace alone through faith alone. It's by grace & works.*" Adding works to grace will get you 1 thing: Lost for eternity. No different than t/Judaizers of Paul's day. Read t/book of Galatians. Here are t/Judaizers, men who believed in JC, they believed in grace. They believed in faith. But they didn't believed in grace alone or faith alone or X alone. One must also do good works that contribute to one's salvation. TAP said, if that's what you believe, you have been severed from X & have fallen from t/way of grace. You are lost.

b. The issue always comes back to the heart

If you are born again your heart is changed and that change will demonstrate itself in your life. Your works (how you act, attitudes, affections) prove your faith. They don't make you saved // contribute to your salvation.

MAT 12:34 "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

MAT 15:18 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart . . .

LUK 6:45 "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil {man} out of the evil {treasure} brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

When Peter warns ==>

10 For, HE WHO WISHES TO LOVE LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.

He is echoing t/Lord's half-brother, James who wrote in his epistle==>

1:26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his {own} heart, this man's religion is worthless.

What does that have to do w/repentance?

D. The Mark of Repentance: What is my Direction? (10-11)

AND LET HIM TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; LET HIM SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.

5. What is repentance?

For most people t/word "repent" conjures up images of a fire-breathing preacher w/a bad hair-do & contorted face. Bad caricature.

During t/Latin period of CH history repentance came to be equated w/penitence, or "doing penance" (cf. Latin Vulgate which translated μετανοια as *paenitentia*). That is not accurate. Doing penance is not repentance. Cf. "justificari".

a. Biblically, the word refers to a turning (what we see in our passage) Turning from evil to good is repentance

(1) Two common words in the OT to convey repentance

(a) שׁוּב

Common to t/OT prophets. שׁוּב means "to turn or return."

i. Word is used 3x in Ezek. 14:6

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God,' Repent (שׁוּב) and turn away (שׁוּב) from your idols, and turn (שׁוּב) your faces away from all your abominations.

(b) Another Hebrew word commonly used to relate the idea of repentance is the word **נחם** (110x in OT)

According to BDB Heb. Lexi. t/root meaning of **נחם** is to be sorry. Origin of t/root means "to draw a deep breath." Portrays feelings of sorrow.

(2) In the NT the common word for repentance is **μετανοια**

There's a pop. teaching out there that says repentance is only a change of mind. It has nothing to do w/one's behavior. That is not true (Matt. 3:8; Rev. 16:11).

(3) Repentance involves the entire person

Mind & behavior. All that is your life. It's to turn away from evil to good // be grieved or sorry for sin // have a different attitude toward it.

b. We know that repentance is required for salvation (Luke 13:5)

As one of the Puritans observed ==>

"I am sure that repentance is of such importance that there is no being saved without it. After Paul's shipwreck he swam to shore on planks and broken pieces of the ship. In Adam we all suffered shipwreck, and repentance is the only plank left us after shipwreck to swim to heaven."

[Thomas Watson, The Doctrine of Repentance, 12-13]

(1) What does that mean?

Does it mean someone has to clean up their act before they believe? How can those who are spiritually dead repent? I agree w/John Calvin (I usu. do) that repentance is a fruit of saving faith. It's not t/same as my believing t/gospel, but it's sort of like t/other side of t/coin.

God regenerates your heart in one instance & you believe & that belief encompasses repentance. For example, if you once thought that being good or religious could make you right B4 G. you forsake that belief & embrace t/Gospel. You have sorrow for your sin // you desire to forsake your sin to pursue righteousness.

(1) Ephesians 2:1-10 outlines the entire process

You were dead in your sin / God made you alive (regeneration) / You are saved by grace alone through faith alone, not by works / That grace & faith are granted by God as a gift / End result is that we walk in good works (fruit of repentance), those that G. has prepared B4 hand.

c. Repentance is a word that implies change

Change of mind / direction. Change of mind from unbelief to belief & a change of direction from sinfulness to t/pursuit of righteousness.

I. Marks of the Believer's Birthright (8-12)

D. The Mark of Repentance: What is my Direction? (10-11)

AND LET HIM TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD . . .

6. Here's an important point: this is not a one-time deal!

We don't repent t/moment we are saved & then quit. Xns are to live lives of perpetual repentance. THIS IS A MARK OF THE BELIEVER'S BIRTHRIGHT (mark of saving faith).

a. Think about that! (this has been very convicting for me)

When's t/last time you thought about repenting from sin? From sin in general or a particular sin?

I have to confess, like an over-the-hill athlete sinking into a hot tub I've sort of eased my way into a comfortable existence. I'm a Christian. I study God's Word. I pray. I share my faith. I love t/brethren. I'm sitting in a hot-tub of comfortable spirituality.

{b. Thomas Watson}

Over t/past week or two I read through a book by t/English Puritan Thomas Watson, entitled "The Doctrine of Repentance."

"Repentance is necessary for God's own people, who have a real work of grace and are Israelites indeed. They must offer up a daily sacrifice of tears. The Antinomians hold that when any come to believe they have a writ of ease, and there remains nothing for them now to do but to rejoice. Yes, they have something else to do, and that is to repent. Repentance is a continuous act. The issue of godly sorrow mut not be quite stopped till death."

Motivation for this, he writes, is love, true love for X. A desire to please him, a fear / a sadness in displeasing him.

"The sins of the wicked pierce Christ's side. The sins of the godly go to his heart." Do we believe that?! {repeat quote}

(1) Watson gives no less than 8 areas that we are to take note of in our living lives of repentance

(a) Repent of your rash censuring

Judgmental attitudes and lack of grace. Certainly t/point of this passage. Partakers of grace give evidence of grace. Graced people are to be gracious people.

(b) Repent of your vain thoughts

By that he means idle or godless thoughts that give birth to godless attitudes & actions.

(c) Repent of your vain fashions

A pre-occupation w/how you look // clothing. Focusing on t/outward & temporal to t/neglect of t/inward & eternal.

"It is strange that the garments which God has given to cover shame should discover pride."

(d) Repent of your decays in grace

This is a heart that is waxing cold. This is t/danger of leaving your first love. So he asks:

"Where are those flames of affection, those sweet meltings of spirit that you [once] had?"

I can think of few things that grieve me more than observing someone who is white-hot for t/faith, in love w/JC. Excited to serve Him. Then to watch that excitement wane, that love grow cool. Participation in t/life of t/Body diminishes; Spiritual disciplines fall by t/wayside.

That describes some of you. Repent from your decays in grace, that t/smouldering embers of your spiritual affections ignite into H.S. fire.

(e) Repent of your non-improvement of talents

IOW - God has given you much. He's granted to you health, possessions, natural abilities, spiritual gifts, family, friends, CH. Don't be like t/wicked servant of Matt. 25 who took that which God had entrusted to him & buried it in t/ground. "Tis one short life, shall soon be past; only that which was done for Christ shall last."

(f) Repent of your worldliness

James says that to be a friend of t/world is to be an enemy of God.

Of Demas, Paul writes 2 Tim. 4:10 - "He has loved this present world and has forsaken me."

Phil. 2:21 - seek after their own interests and not those of X.

1 John 2:15 - "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Like Lot's wife we are double-minded, an eye toward heaven & an eye toward t/allures of t/world.

"By your profession you seem to resemble the birds of paradise that soar aloft and live upon the dew of heaven. Yet as serpents you lick the dust."

(g) Repent of your divisions

That is, t/factions & cliques that separate you. Looking down your noses at other believers because they don't uphold every minutia of doctrine that you do.

Just this past week I learned of a local Christian leader who won't fellowship w/those who do not subscribe to the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith.

I visited a webpage last week that had some noteworthy content. I thought, "this is pretty good." Then I took a closer look & discovered that t/website was filled with page after page of vitriol. Criticizing this group & that group. At t/forefront was the contention that the KJV is t/only true Bible & they featured links to t/evils of t/NASB & NIV & even t/NKJV. They slammed Catholic & Charismatic alike. And, no surprise, they also waxed weak on t/supposed errors of Calvinism.

It's sort of like t/old joke about a man arriving in heaven. He's brought to t/mansion on a hilltop. There are myriads of rooms and banquet halls. There are t/redeemed, of every tribe, tongue, nation, and even those who were of various CH affiliations. Then he comes to a double-door that is closed. "What's behind t/door?" he asks? The angel answers, "That's where we keep t/legalists. They think they are t/only one's here."

Legalists weary me! Graceless people weary me. Yes, there's a time and a place to take a stand. We must never compromise t/truth of t/Gospel. But, good grief, let's not make enemies out of true believers w/whom we are in vast agreement.

(h) Repent for the iniquity of your holy things

By that Watson means, repent of your apathy toward t/means of God's grace in worship. Your apathy toward God's Word // hearing God's Word proclaimed // Worship in song // prayer.

He asks, "How often have the services of God's worship been frozen with formality and soured with pride?"

And in true pastoral fashion, Watson realizes that our repentance will never be perfect. We will always need grace.

"The hearts of the best are like Peter's sheet, on which there were a number of unclean, creeping things. Paul shook the viper which was on his hand into the fire, but we cannot shake off original corruption in this life. . . . let us lament the corruption of our will and our affections."

I. Marks of the Believer's Birthright (8-12)

D. The Mark of Repentance: What is my Direction? (10-11)

AND LET HIM TURN AWAY FROM EVIL . . .

7. Turn away comes from the Greek word ἐκκλινω

To bend aside, to turn from. It's to steer one's course away when evil approaches.

Like Augustine who, after his conversion, was walking town t/street. He saw a prostitute walking toward him, a woman he once cohabited with. What does he do? He crosses over to the other side of the street. The woman calls out, "Augustine, Augustine, it is me!" He replied, "Yes, I know, but it is no longer me."

To turn from evil is to cross to the other side of the road.

a. Again, this is repentance

But repentance is always a turning from one thing to something else. We don't just turn away from sin to ourselves, or to nothing. We turn to that which is good. (cf. v. 9a - not enough to refrain from injury -but give a blessing).

... LET HIM TURN AWAY FROM EVIL ...

AND DO GOOD ...

... LET HIM SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.

Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

ROM 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

ROM 14:19 So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Goes right back to verse 9 {read}

I. Marks of the Believer's Birthright (8-12)

D. The Mark of Repentance: What is my Direction? (10-11)

E. The Mark of God's Favor: Where is my Deliverance? (12)

That was t/context of t/Psalm (34). David's gratitude for God's deliverance.

FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE UPON THE RIGHTEOUS AND HIS EARS [OPEN] TO THEIR PRAYER. BUT HIS FACE IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL. Note anthropomorphisms - "eyes" ; "ears" and "face"

Psalm 34:16 **The face of the \Lord\ is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth.**

This verse shows the fate of two kinds of people: Those whom God receives and those whom He opposes. God delights in those who are his. He opposes those who are not.

I came across a frightening account from history last week

It's t/story of Francis Spira, an Italian lawyer who embraced t/Gospel through t/influence of Luther & t/Reformation on / about year 1548. For 6 years he played t/role of an evangelical Christian. Then he began to have doubts. Maybe I was rash? He asked. How can I question t/one Holy RC CH into which I was baptized?

He goes to the CH leaders in Venice & confesses.

“Having for these divers years entertained an opinion concerning some articles of faith, contrary to the orthodox and received judgement of the Church, and uttered many things against the authority of the Church of Rome, and the universal Bishop of Christ, I humbly acknowledge my fault, and error, and my folly in misteaching others. I therefore yield myself in all obedience to the Supreme Bishop into the bosom of the Church of Rome, never to depart again from the traditions and decrees of the Holy See.

I am heartily sorry for what is past, and I humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.”

Articles of recantation are drawn up. He's asked to confess that t/doctrine of the Church of Rome is holy and true, and to disallow the opinions of Luther, and other such heretics, as false, and damnable.

This he does. And as t/biographer writes,

"Thus did the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the good seed that was formerly sown in his heart."

In addition, he is fined 30 pieces of gold and he is sent home to his family. No sooner does he depart and he hears a voice,

“Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied the Lord for “30 pieces of silver.” Thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience, and thou hast broken thy vow by denying the truth of God. Hence Apostate, bear with thee the sentence of thy eternal damnation.”

From that moment on he found no peace of mind believing that he was captive under the revenging hand of God.

He becomes ill. His friends visit him and many Xns try to encourage him.

"Spira, it's not too late. There is no unpardonable sin other than unbelief."

But, he confesses,

“I did believe it true when I denied it, but now I neither believe that, nor the doctrine of the Roman Church. I believe nothing. I have no faith, no trust, no hope. I am a reprobate like Cain, or Judas, who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair, and my friends do me great wrong, that they suffer me not to go to the place of unbelievers as I justly deserve. My heart is dead and cold, and it was so from the beginning, though I believed Luther was right and Rome was wrong.”

He could no longer believe t/Gospel or trust in God's mercy.

Usually apostates have no sense of their own damnation. Sam Harris, a renowned atheist, proudly claims to have been an Evangelical. Others hear t/truth, seemingly embrace it, & then reject it in favor of some religious system of works righteousness. These have no sensitivity to t/lostness of their estate. Here is a man who knows he's apostate, he knows he's lost, and yet cannot believe in t/truth so as to be saved.

He says, "

"I see my damnation, and I know my remedy is only in Christ, yet I cannot set myself to lay hold on it, for such are the punishments of the damned." They confess what I confess, they repent of their loss of heaven, and they envy the Elect, yet that selfish repentance doth them no good, for they cannot mend their ways without grace. . . . I cannot believe, though I once thought I did. . . . I thought I knew Him, by His beloved Son, the author and finisher of our salvation, and that I could pray to Him, and hope for pardon of sins from Him. But it was not of grace for it did not come from the heart. I had deluded myself."

Then, quoting Hebrews chapter six, he says,

"It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance. . . . What a fearful thing to be almost a Christian!"

Thus as he spoke, tears all the while trickling down, he cries out:

"Oh brethren, take a diligent heed to your life; make more account of the gift of God's Word than I have done, and learn to beware my misery. Think not you are assured Christians, because you understand something

of the Gospel. Take heed you grow not secure on that ground. Be constant and immovable in the maintaining of your profession. Confess even unto death if you be called thereto. Remember the Word, that he that loveth father, mother, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, kindred, houses, lands, more than Christ, is not worthy of Him.”

“I do not speak this to derogate from the certainty of saving faith, and the promises of the Gospel, for they are most sure; but take heed of relying on that Faith that works not a holy and unblameable life, worthy of a believer. Credit me, it will fail, I have tried it! I presumed I had gotten the right faith, I preached it to others, I had all places of Scripture in memory that might support it.”

He has visions of the hosts of hell about him. He wastes away, subject to a terminal illness solely spiritual in nature.

"He lay about eight weeks in this case, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving anything but by force, and that without digestion, so spent, that he appeared a perfect Anatomy, being nothing but sinews and bones. . . . In a continual torment, yet his own tormentor, and thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience, and despair, like a living man in Hell, he represented an extraordinary example of the justice and power of God. Thus . . . he departed this present life."

Afterward, Nathaniel Bacon wrote a short book about this event entitled, "The Fearful Account of Francis Spira." Calvin wrote the preface & his misery, it was said, was known far and wide.

I. Marks of the Believer's Birthright (8-12)

A. The Mark of Love:

B. The Mark of Forgiveness:

C. The Mark of God's Call:

D. The Mark of Repentance:

E. The Mark of God's Favor:

Marks of comfort for t/Christian. Marks of demerit for t/"Almost Xn."

Hebrews 12:16-17 16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

"Just because he sought for it with tears does not indicate sincerity or true remorse. He found no place for repentance. He bitterly regretted, but he did not repent. He selfishly wanted God's blessings, but he did not want God. He had fully apostatized, and was forever outside the pale of God's grace. He went on "sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth," and there no longer remained any sacrifice to cover his sins (Heb. 10:26). We must be vigilant so that no one turns from the truth, becomes bitter, or follows the course of selfish Esau, who wanted God's blessing desperately-but not on God's terms (Mark 10:17-22)." [Gill]

Note that Bunyan's "caged man" in Interpreter's house was Spiva ==>

So He took him by the hand again, and led him into a very dark room, where there sat a man in an iron cage. Now the man, to look on, seemed very sad; he sat with his eyes looking down to the ground, his hands folded together, and he sighed as if he would break his heart. Then said Christian, What means this? At which the Interpreter bid him talk with the man.

Then Said Christian to the man, What art thou? The man answered, I am what I was not once. What wast thou once? The man said, I was once a fair and flourishing professor, both in mine own eyes, and also in the eyes

of others; I once was, as I thought, fair for the Celestial City, and had then even joy at the thoughts that I should get thither (Luke 8:13). Well, but what art thou now? I am now a man of despair, and am shut up in it, as in this iron cage. I cannot get out. O now I cannot! But how camest thou in this condition? I left off to watch and be sober; I laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts; I sinned against the light of the Word, and the goodness of God; I have grieved the Spirit, and He is gone; I tempted the devil, and he is come to me; I have provoked God to anger, and He has left me; I have so hardened my heart, that I cannot repent. Then said Christian to the Interpreter, But is there no hope for such a man as this? Ask him, said the Interpreter. Nay, said Christian, pray Sir, do you. Then said the Interpreter, Is there no hope, but you must be kept in the iron cage of despair? I have crucified Him to myself afresh (Heb. 4:6); I have despised His person (Luke 19:14); I have despised His righteousness; I have "counted His blood an unholy thing"; I have "done despite to the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:28, 29). Therefore I have shut myself out of all the promises, and there now remains to me nothing but threatenings, dreadful threatenings, fearful threatenings of certain judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour me as an adversary. For what did you bring yourself into this condition? For the lusts, pleasures, and profits of this world; in the enjoyment of which I did then promise myself much delight; but now every one of those things also bite me, and gnaw me like a burning worm.

But the promise for those who are His ==>

The Interpreter answered, This fire is the work of grace that is wrought in the heart; he that casts water upon it, to extinguish and put it out, is the Devil; but in that thou seest the fire notwithstanding burn higher and hotter, thou shalt also see the reason of that. So he had him about to the backside of the wall, where he saw a man with a vessel of oil in his hand, of the which He did also continually cast, but secretly, into the fire. Then

said Christian, What means this? The Interpreter answered, This is Christ, who continually, with the oil of his grace, maintains the work already begun in the heart: by the means of which, notwithstanding what the devil can do, the souls of His people prove gracious still (2 Cor. 12:9). And in that thou sawest that the man stood behind the wall to maintain the fire, that is to teach thee that it is hard for the tempted to see how this work of grace is maintained in the soul.

Beware lest there be in any one of you an unbelieving heart in falling away from t/living God. Beware that your love not grow cold. Beware that you don't put off coming to X while there's still time to do so.