

Repentance

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Date: 10 November 2013

[0 : 00] I want to talk today about a neglected doctrine. A neglected doctrine. It was the first message of Christ.

! The first message of John the Baptist. The first of Paul. It was the first message from hell. The first message after the Ascension.! The last message. The last message of Christ. The message to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. And it has become the most ignored message.

The most ignored doctrine of sorts, certainly of some, of our time in many churches. What am I talking about?

The doctrine of repentance. The doctrine of repentance. It's a forgotten doctrine. It's something neglected. A key doctrine, nevertheless, of the Bible.

The doctrine of repentance. The doctrine of repentance is spoken of. As we look at the doctrine of repentance. As we look at the doctrine of repentance. As we look at the doctrine of repentance.

[1 : 26] Look through 51 through 60. Notice how the people responded when he said, Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. Verse 54, it says they were cut to the heart.

And then verse 57, they stopped their ears. They didn't want to hear that message. They were resisting the Holy Spirit conviction that would lead to repentance.

Awareness of sin brings conviction. Conviction then is designed to bring repentance. But if resisted, it brings a hardness of heart.

That's what happened in Acts 7, as we see what they did to Stephen. They resisted the Holy Spirit. They were cut to the heart. They stopped their ears. They resisted the Holy Spirit conviction that would lead to repentance.

They did not have conviction. That led to repentance. It led to hardness of heart. So we're going to look at this doctrine of repentance.

[2 : 32] We're going to look at what it is, what the Bible says about it. So we see in Acts 3, verse 19, another gospel preacher, Peter, preached repentance.

Acts 3, verse 19, he says, Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, and that the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Repent ye therefore and be converted. Repent. Repent. What is repentance? What is repentance? Here are some definitions I've picked up. Repentance is forsaking our self-destructive ways and accepting God's way that leads to the path of life.

When we repent, we submit our thinking, our actions, our reactions, our will, our lifestyle to Christ's Lordship. It means to turn.

[3 : 33] To turn. To do a 180. A 180. Repentance means a turning around, a turning away from sin and a turning unto God.

Isaiah 55, verse 7, it says, Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Repentance is the wicked forsaking his way. It's facing up to sin and forsaking it. Nowadays, sin is relabeled.

Relabeled. Some call sin and the way of sin, poor life choices. It's kind of the politically correct way of saying it.

[4 : 49] Or mistakes. You know, they don't want to use the word sin. William Booth, in his last major address a century ago, said, I fear the day will come when preachers will preach heaven without hell and faith without repentance.

Repentance, it has been said, is not a work for salvation and never was. It is a change of mind that involves a change of attitude towards myself, my sin and my God.

It is a change of mind that can no longer tolerate disobedience to God. Here's another quote. James MacDonald says, Repentance is a change in every way and at every level. Repentance is a change in me. Not a change in my spouse. Not a change of my job. Not a change of where I live or who I hang out with. Repentance is a change in the place where it's needed most. Inside me. Repentance is a recognition of sin for what it is. Followed by heartfelt sorrow culminating in a change of behaviour. I see sin for what it is.

[6 : 08] Changing my mind. I experience heartfelt sorrow. Changing my heart or emotions. I determine to change my behaviour. Changing my will. Repentance is change at every level of your being.

In your mind, your heart, your will. Repentance. Another definition, biblical repentance, is God aligning our passions and ways to his own.

Repentance. It's an important subject. So what does the Bible say about repentance? What does the Bible tell us on this subject of repentance? Repentance is a common theme in both the Old and the New Testaments.

In the Old, we see many sermons of repentance as the central message. Of preachers like Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Jonah.

All did preach repentance. That message was basically the same. In the New, it was common too. A theme that was common.

[7 : 13] Repentance is mentioned 70 times in the New Testament. In the very first sermon of John the Baptist in Matthew 3 verse 2, the message was repent.

Repent. The first sermon of the Lord Jesus in Mark 1 verse 15. Repent. When Jesus sent his disciples in Mark 6 verse 12, he told them preach, among other things that they were to do, preach repentance.

The Lord Jesus said, Except you repent, you shall likewise perish. The circumstance was of destruction. A natural event of destruction.

We can think of that in these days. The great typhoon that struck another land. And we can think, unless we repent, we shall perish.

Christ preached repentance. In Matthew 9 we see where the Lord Jesus came to Matthew, the tax collector, as he was at the receipt of custom. And he said, Follow me. Verse 9 of chapter 9 of Matthew.

[8 : 16] And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass as Jesus sat at meat. In other words, he was sitting eating in the house. Behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

Many tax collectors, sorry, publicans and sinners. Same thing. They sat down with him. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?

Verse 12. But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that beholden not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what it meaneth.

I will have mercy and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Matthew 9, 13. For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. That's important. Jesus met with the sinners, repentant sinners. Sadly, some Bible translations take out the key word here, to repentance.

[9 : 23] Jesus didn't come to call, to not call the righteous, but sinners. But he came to call the sinners to repentance. That's an important difference there.

Likewise in Mark 2, 17. Jesus came to call sinners, not just to call sinners, but to call sinners to repentance. It's one of his key missions that he counted as an essential part of his ministry.

So what is real repentance? What is repentance? Repentance is a call for people to be reconciled to God. Paul preached it.

In Acts 20, it says, as he went from house to house, that he preached repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. In Acts 26, verse 21. In Acts 26, verse 20, he called men to bring forth fruits, meat for repentance.

In other words, that there should be some fruit that had an accord with their repentance. That it was appropriate and followed on. So when there's real repentance, there'll be some eminent fruit to show for it.

[10:38] There was a story in newspapers some while back of a man from Kansas called Al Johnson. Al Johnson came to faith in Jesus Christ.

And the story was remarkable as to what happened with Al Johnson. When he found his newfound faith in Christ, he confessed to a bank robbery that he had participated in when he was 19 years old.

It was so long ago that the case had run out. There was no prosecution required for his offence. But still he believed that an offence had been committed.

And he believed that his relationship with the Lord Jesus demanded a confession. And he even voluntarily repaid his share of the stolen money. That's the fruits of repentance.

That is where someone makes restitution. Where they acknowledge their sin and they rectify their wrongdoing. That's the fruits of repentance. We see in Luke 15, we see repentance illustrated graphically as the Lord Jesus tells some record of the prodigal son, of the lost coin, of the lost sheep.

[11:57] In Luke 15, the Lord Jesus uses this word, repentance, more than any other place. And it's interesting when you consider the story of the good shepherd and the lost sheep.

The Lord Jesus said this story, the three stories were about repentance. So in what way did the sheep repent? Was the sheep truly and seriously sorrowful as it walked away?

That it had walked away? We're not even sure if the sheep knew that it was lost. The repentance of the sheep was in accepting the shoulders of the shepherd.

It was accepting the position on the shoulders of the good shepherd. The sheep was totally then identified with the shepherd. It's like that with the prodigal son. Luke 15 through 18, that familiar one.

He's there in the pig pen. He says, I will arise. As he's there in the muck and mire and the stench and the degrading condition of his servanthood in this slimy pig pen.

[13:03] I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Make me as one of thy hired servants. Verse 20, and he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

The moment of repentance for the prodigal. When did that happen? There's different thoughts. A writer I've picked this from says, It wasn't really when he came to himself.

Because when we come to ourselves, we only find ourselves. Even when the father ran towards the son, he continued to repeat his own ideas. He had this idea, this thinking, Oh, I'm going to pay off my debt to my father.

I'm going to correct the wrong that I've done and make everything right. The father never commanded his son to stop his rehearse speech. But instead he embraced him, kissed him, hugged him.

[14:19] And finally the prodigal son became silent. No more suggestion on what he himself is going to do. But instead of accepting the acceptance from his father. The prodigal accepted the father's love and he was restored.

It was at that moment that the repentance was receptive. As he surrendered his own performance and he accepted the love of the father. The love of the one who had been relentlessly seeking for him.

It's interesting, isn't it? The repentance was the acceptance. It was the surrender. It was the arms of the shepherd. But it was the arms of the father that brought that restoration.

So repentance, I suppose it can, in a sense, come where we come to the end of ourselves. As the prodigal son expended and wasted his inheritance in foolish ways.

He demanded his own way and got it. He realised his foolishness. He came to his senses.

[15:32] He came to himself. He then admits that he has sinned. Verse 18. I will arise and go to my father. And say to him, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.

Repentance. Coming to our senses. Admitting we have sinned. And then realising, recognising our personal unworthiness. Verse 19.

I'm no more worthy to be called thy son. What a transaction was made there. As we see, he realised his unworthy condition. He realised his unworthy state.

And humility was met by God's grace. What a wonderful picture it is. Repentance. As much as the Bible says. What does God say?

God commands repentance. In Acts 17 verse 13. Paul preaches. God commands now all men everywhere to repent. It's a command.

[16:31] It's an imperative. And thank God. God not only commands repentance. But he grants it. He gives it. In Romans 2 verse 4 it says.

In part the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. God's goodness leads us there. So that repentance stayed. In Acts 11 verse 18.

It says. They heard these things. They held their peace. Glorified God saying. Then hath God also. So the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

I think that's the occasion of Cornelius' household. It was evident that God had received them. God has granted these people repentance unto life. God has freely gifted it.

Granted it. 2 Timothy 2 verse 25 says something likewise. It says. Of those that. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.

[17:31] If God peradventure will give them repentance. To their acknowledging of the truth. It talks of some opposing themselves. That hopefully peradventure.

God will give them repentance. To their acknowledging of the truth. So God commands repentance. And he gives it. He gives repentance. He gives us time. You know.

Consider. If God was not long suffering. If God in his judgment. Knew no grace and mercy. The moment you sin. You would be destroyed.

And killed. You know. The wages of sin is death. But God grants time. He grants time for repentance. He gives us the gospel. He gives us time. Here's a quote.

That might. Hopefully. Impress us. If we put off repentance. Another day. We have a day more.

[18:29] To repent of. And a day less. To repent in. It's true isn't it. Some people put it off. They put off repentance. If we put off repentance. Another day. We have another day.

More to repent of. And a day less. To repent in. So let's not put off repentance. Let us repent. How does repentance.

Relate to salvation. There's different. Debates on this. Particular issue. That are current. Repentance.

And salvation. How do they relate. I put it to you. That repentance. Is the result. Of salvation. Repentance. Is the. Result. Of salvation.

Really and truly. Repentance. And faith. Are not separate. Steps. But they are linked. They are. Really contemporary. They are. Together. It's like someone has put it.

[19:26] You don't turn from your sins. To trust Jesus. You turn to Jesus. To be forgiven. Of your sins. I'll say that again. You don't turn from your sins.

To trust Jesus. You turn to Jesus. To be forgiven. Of your sins. He's the saviour. He is the saviour. It's not that our salvation. Is a result.

Of our. Doing anything. Not even stopping. The doing. Of what is wrong. Or the turning. To do what is right. An old time preacher. John Rice said.

Repentance. Is inseparable. From faith. Repentance. Is inseparable. From faith. He refers to. The Greek word. For repentance. It means.

A change of mind. A change of attitude. Towards sin. And towards God. A turning. Of the heart. To trust in Christ. A turning. Of the heart. Away. From the love of sin.

[20:21] So repentance. And faith. They're very much. Allied. And connected. And come together. Repentance. Is a inward change. Of the intellect.

Of the mind. Of the attitude. Of the will. Of a person's belief system. And it leads to a change of conduct. Jesus doesn't say to us.

That we must become better. Or improve ourselves. Or become upstanding citizens. Before we can be saved.

No. Not at all. We must come. As we are. Come as we are to him. And he doesn't leave us that way. In Acts 26 verse 20. We see those works fit.

Those works meet. For the act of repentance. There's some works that follow conversion. They follow on from conversion. In 1 Thessalonians 1 verse 9. It says of some.

[21:15] They've turned to God. From idols. To serve the living. And true God. Harry Einstein. Another well known preacher.

Says the gospel. Is not a call. To repentance. Or to amendment of our ways. To make restitution. For past sins. Or to promise to do better. In the future.

These things are proper. In their place. That they do not constitute. The gospel. Because the gospel. Is not. Good advice to be obeyed. It is good news. To be believed.

He goes on. Do not make the mistake. Of thinking the gospel. Is a call to. Duty. A call to reformation. A call to better your condition. Or behave better. In a more perfect way.

Than you've been doing. In the past. Nor is the gospel. The demand. That you give up the world. That you give up your sins. That you break off. Bad habits. Or try to cultivate. Good ones.

[22 : 10] You may do all these things. Yet never believe the gospel. And consequently. Never be saved. At all. You know. Some people. I was reading. In preparation for this.

And the Mormons. Talk a lot about repentance. But they don't have faith. They don't have biblical faith. In the biblical saviour. We can do all kinds of things. To make ourselves better.

Or think more positively. Or do things much more differently. And live better choices. As it were.

Yet. We must have the saviour. We must have the saviour. Einstein goes on. There can be no faith. Without repentance. And.

No repentance. Without faith. What God hath joined together. Let no man. Put asunder. It's interesting. Isn't it? So. As much as. They are distinct.

[23 : 06] They are. Allied. And together. So. Repentance. And faith. Are. Simultaneous. In effect. There can be no faith.

Without repentance. There can be. No repentance. Without faith. So. Repentance. Is not a work. To perform. You know. There's some. Well-meaning. People.

As we know. That. Flagellate. Themselves. And. And. Put themselves. In. Torturous. Monasteries. And. Go on. Huge. Pilgrimages. Walking. On their knees. Up. Masses. Massive. Flights. Stony. Steps. Or. On rough.

Soil. And such like. Thinking. That somehow. They can pay. For their own sin. Repentance. Is not a work. To perform. Because salvation. Is totally. Apart from.

[23 : 59] Human works. It's freely given. Perceived by faith alone. It's interesting. As the gospel of John. Is. Especially. A. A book. That talks of salvation.

The. The salvation message. Yet. It doesn't have repentance. In there. But it has believed. More than 90 times. In 21 chapters. Our repenting.

Is not. What saves us. It's our faith. Faith. Allied. With repentance. Paul. As we said.

In Acts 20. 21. He says. He testified. To the Jews. To the Greeks. Repentance. Towards God. And faith. Towards our Lord. Jesus Christ. The same message. In the same.

Breath. Repentance. Is that. Change. Of mind. About our sinfulness. About. Our condition. And the change.

[24 : 55] In your heart. Is God's part. He makes it happen. He makes us turn. From our sins. Our part. Is simply. To trust him. So. Repentance.

Just to. Put it to you tonight. It's a turning point. A turning point. It means a. U-turn. You're going. Into sin. You make a U-turn.

Towards God. Let the wicked. Forsake his way. It's a different way. It's a different direction. And it's not a 360 degree. It's a 180 degree.

Now some people. Think they can reform themselves. It's got to be God's word. A turning process. The theologian. Berkhoff said. True repentance. Never exists.

Except. In conjunction. With faith. Where true faith is. Will be real. Repentance. Repentance.

They're different aspects. Of the same turning. A turning away from sin.

[25 : 50] In the direction of God. Complementary parts. Of the same process. So. Friends. Repentance is. An important. Biblical doctrine.

It's something. The Bible speaks much of. It's something we ought to. Take. Heart in tonight. That. Repentance. Is commanded. And repentance. Is granted.

By God. It's a U-turn. We see that in Acts 9.35. It says. That those who dwelt. At Lydda. And Saron. They turn. To the Lord.

Matthew 18.3. The Lord Jesus. It says. Except you be. Converted. In other words. Turned about.

It's the same. Sense of it. Except you be. Converted.

And become as little children. You shall not. Enter into the kingdom of heaven. How do we become. Like little children. As much as little children.

We see the message of repentance is throughout the scriptures, in old and new, in the prophets and apostles, in the message that they delivered.

It's the message still that we need today. We ought to repent, seek the Lord and repent. And friends tonight, I urge you, one and all, in the hearing of this message, that you would find God grants you repentance unto life.

Repentance unto life. And it's not a working of your own that you can lay any claim for it. It's God granting it. God makes it happen.

[32 : 47] And God brings us to our knees, as He did Jonah. He humbles us. He makes us, brings us low.

He humbles us. He makes us dependent, like a little child, so that we can be converted, that we can come in humility. And, you know, sometimes we can get proud, can't we?

I know I can get proud. And we need to be humbled in His sight. And Christians, we all need that. Brothers and sisters, we all need that. That God will bring us to our knees.

That God will bring us to that place of humility. Because He resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Let us pray. We love you, Lord, and thank you that your word is truth.

And we know that, Lord Jesus, you came. As you came to Matthew, and he was met there by the one who said, follow me.

[33 : 51] Lord Jesus, you said to him, follow me. And you turned his life around. And you do that still today. As we trust you, as we believe, through your mercies, through your tender mercies, we can be granted repentance unto life.

We pray that we might all know what it is to face up to our sin and forsake it. Help us, Lord, to find grace in your sight.

Humble us, Lord, that we might not even be proud of our repenting. Because it's the least we can do. That it's not really anything we can lay claim to.

Even our repenting is only because you've given us time to come to the end of ourselves. And by your Holy Spirit, you've drawn us to yourself.

We thank you, Lord, that your tender mercies are still extended to planet Earth today. To those that will hear. To those that you've called. Lord, we pray. Grant us to hear that message and to respond.

[34 : 57] Help us as Christians to see those in great need. The majority of which are headed in the hellward direction in this life. Lord, that we might stand with some warning signs.

That we might stand with some message to see them turn in time. that we might be part of that. Lord, we pray.

Use us, Lord, that we might be message boards, sandwich boards, as it were. Stop signs on that road to hell, but the majority are streaming down.

Lord, that by your grace, one or two might turn while there's still time. And if there's any here tonight yet to be saved, that they might know, as they trust you, there's a turning point that happens and it's a revolution that you do by your Spirit on the inside of us.

A new direction, a new life begins. We thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.