

The Call to Repentance and Reflection: Joel 2:12-13, Luke 13:1-5, and 2 Corinthians 5:20

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Date: 18 February 2024

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daly preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. All right. Well, good morning, everyone. Let's go ahead and head to our seats.

It is great to be with you this morning. Today, we're going to go ahead and start a new sermon series. It's that second slide on here, which is our series is titled, Sacred Journey from Death to Life.

I know that's a pretty powerful image when we're thinking of death to life. This is going to be our sermon series from this Sunday all the way to Easter Sunday.

The title for our sermon today is The Call to Repentance and Reflection. This is going to be the beginning again of our series during Lent.

[1 : 09] Lent is a time where we are focused on reflecting on the story about Jesus, on Jesus's last days here on the earth.

It's a time where we look and we reflect on his life, his sacrifice, his ministry and his miracles, but also his death on the cross, his burial and his resurrection on the third day.

And as we go from this sacred journey, we will begin journeying together in Scripture. And today, we will be exploring passages in your notes. You'll see on here passages from Joel, chapter two, from Luke 13 and then second Corinthians on here.

So I'll be going through three passages this morning, but before we go any further, I would like for us to open in a word of prayer. Will you pray with me? Let's pray together.

And Father, we thank you for this time and this time together in love and in unity. And as we're beginning this new sermon series, we ask that you are with us on this sacred journey through Scripture.

[2 : 20] May we learn more about your son, Jesus the Messiah. We come before you with humble hearts. Let us have open hearts and to love like you and open minds to be filled with the Holy Spirit and biblical truth.

We ask that you help us to come to understand what it means to reflect on our lives and what does this word repent or repentance mean? To change our mind from not knowing to knowing, from unbelief to belief in you.

May we turn to you and may we see how important it is to reflect and how we are to make an appeal for others to be reconciled, how we are to literally beg for others to be reconciled with Christ.

We ask Father that you lead and that you guide us, as you always have, in spirit and in truth. It is in Jesus' name that we pray and we all say together, amen.

You know, in the world that we live in today, it's hard to ignore the fact that it seems like any second, any moment that we watch TV or even if we listen to the radio or we scroll through social media, it's very hard to ignore the fact that there's just some crazy stuff that's going on in the world.

[3 : 41] We have the war that's between Israel and Hamas, we have the conflicts between Ukraine and Russia and that's just two. There's more issues that are happening globally but also in our own country and of course, let's not forget, there are issues that happened in our community.

These things that happen, they are certainly tragic events that we should not ignore, we shouldn't turn a blind eye towards. It's in moments as these, it's a call for us as Christians to pray but also for us to turn to Him for direction.

We pray to the Lord our God for direction and even for divine intervention at times. We find that as we turn to our first scripture reading that there is this imagery, there is this language of the coming of the day of the Lord.

The day of the Lord as we're setting up the scene, it's coming near and there is this war that's on the horizon as you'll see. Go ahead and put up the Joel, our scripture reading, you can turn there as I'm explaining this.

It seems that there is this war coming, there's this issue with locusts that's happening in the land and it seems certainly that there is no hope.

[4 : 59] So let's turn together, it's going to be Joel chapter 2 verses 12 through 13 and you'll find this in page 904 to 905.

So let's turn there together.

So Joel chapter 2 verses 12 through 13, it says here, yet even now declares the Lord, return to me with all of your what?

With all of your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning. Now listen to this, and rend your hearts and not your garments.

Return to the Lord your God for he is gracious and merciful. Is he quick to anger? He's slow to anger and he's abounding in steadfast love and he relents over disaster. And this is where God is saying to people that despite the fact that there is all of these terrible things that are coming, now is the time to turn to the Lord. And with that events that happen in our own lives, the time is now to turn to the Lord. God explains what it looks like to return to the Lord through fasting, through weeping and through mourning. You see that right in the Scripture.

[6 : 52] And in verse 13, we see that God is saying something that is very interesting in here. If you go to verse 13, God is saying to return to him right and how to go about it.

And then it says in here, to what? To rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God. And I want to focus for a second here on this idea of to rend your hearts and not your garments. And I have this image on here.

It's this image of, you know, it's just a generated image of someone who's focusing on their heart and not their garment. Well, when the world does that mean? Well, typically in verses like this, you find the tearing of the robe, right? In Jewish culture, the tearing of the robe or the garment, it is a moment of mourning. It's a time of weeping.

You'll find this in Genesis. This is not in your notes, but in Genesis, in 2 Samuel and in Job. Those are examples of the tearing of the robe. But it is in this specific moment where God is saying literally to, well, it's saying to tear your heart and not your clothing.

I'm not saying to literally rip out your heart though, but focus on what is affecting your heart instead of this action of tearing your clothes. It's a call from God for internal change rather than this external action of the mourning or the ripping of clothes. And this reminds us of how God wants us to have a deeper relationship with him, not just a superficial one where you just go through the motions or you just go through action. God does not want us to simply go through the motions or actions without the heart. For having a relationship with the Lord, it's a matter of the heart. Perhaps in your life, have you felt the need to return to God? Have you felt the pull from God to reflect and repent? Maybe there's been a separation. Maybe there's a call for you to pray to the Lord, to return to the Lord, maybe focus on your hearts. Do you feel such a call in your life? The tearing of the heart, it speaks of this idea of repentance, which is, we'll go over this further. It's the changing of one's mind. And in turn, it is turning back to God.

[9 : 26] A modern day equivalent would be saying sorry for an action and changing your mind towards how you act. I want you to think about that. Really? Really? My page goes. You'll find in your notes, there's a chart that I have. I didn't put it on the screen, but it's a chart that you'll see in here. It's this chart of where you see that the Lord is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abounding instead fast love and relenting of disaster. And you know what's really interesting about this is that there's a pattern that is in Scripture, just like how we went over the book of Jonah, where we see in Jonah 4-2, you don't have to turn there. It's the same wording. It's the same language describing this attribute of God being gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abounding instead fast love. It's just wonderful when we find a connection in Scripture like that.

And with that in mind, I'd like for us to turn to our second Scripture, which is going to be found in the Gospel of Luke. It's going to be Luke 13-1-5, and that's going to be on page 1037.

So let's turn together.

Let's read it together. There were some present at that very time who told him, who told Christ about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. What's going on there?

And he answered them, do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all of the other Galileans because they suffered in this way? So someone's asking Jesus this question.

[11 : 48] No, I tell you. But unless you repent, you will also likewise perish. Then there's the story about those 18 on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them. Do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you. But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. So you have this moment where you have two events that are happening. You have this in what is that verse one, the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifice. Well, what's unfortunate is what's happening here is people are offering sacrifices and their blood was shed while giving doing their sacrifice, which was a terrible thing that happened. And here you're reading about Pilate doing that. That's a tragic event that had happened.

And also further down, you're seeing the Tower of Siloam where it fell and it killed 18 people. That's also a very tragic event. And then there's this, do you think that these people are worse sinners? Are they worse sinners than others because of this tragic event? What is going on here?

You have Christ who's responding in regards to a tragic event that happens. We see that when we live here on earth, there are tragic events that happen, things, disasters or bad events that happen in our own lives or to other people, things that we find in the news. It is a response to the question, who sin is greater? Clearly they had it coming. And you see that people believed it then. And there's some people that believe it now. I'm sure that some of us have thought of this before.

It's easy to come to such a conclusion. But in the eyes of God though, sin, all sin is bad in the eyes of God. Just because a bad event, if a tower falls on you or you die in, you know, combat or you something tragic happens to you, that doesn't mean that your sin is worse off than the next person.

And that's the underlying lesson that we find in here because we find that Christ is saying, no, unless you repent, you will also likewise perish. That is the focus on here. Sin is a separation from God. It is to miss the mark. And you see in Luke verse three in chapter 13 verse three and verse five, there is a repeating about repentance and perishing. Now I want to take a moment here in this idea of the word repentance. Some of us have heard before the idea that we must repent and we must believe, right? You also hear the word thrown around a lot, right? Repent the Lord or you should repent of your sins. The word is defined as to think differently or to change your mind about someone or something. And I want to ask you, have you ever been moved or convicted to change maybe your action, maybe a certain mindset that you've had? Maybe it's time for you to reflect on who Christ is in your life and how you can change your mind to see that

[15 : 15] Christ is more than just a teacher or a really cool guy, right? Or maybe it's something different that the Lord is trying to change your mind about a certain belief or something, maybe some healing that needs to happen. When we come to know the Lord, we allow for God to work in and through us so that we can change our mind. Listen very closely, repentance, changing our mind about who Jesus Christ is. This is to help us understand scripture. There are many verses that speak of believe in the Lord and be saved, right? In that there is the idea of repentance.

In order to believe in the Lord, your mind has to be changed from unbelief to belief, from not knowing who the Lord is to coming to know the Lord. Repentance in the biblical sense is the understanding that our minds are to come to know who Christ the Lord is. Let me repeat myself here. Repentance is changing our mind to come to know the Lord. It is going from unbelief to belief, from not knowing who Christ is to knowing who Christ is. And you'll see, I'm going to put this image on here, this picture of a butterfly. There's a word that you'll find here on your notes, which is metanoia or metanoeo. Today I'll just focus on metanoia. It's pretty much the same thing. It's the difference between repent and repentance. It's very similar. So metanoia, you may know the word meta, right? Like the company meta from Facebook, right? Meta means beyond or to change. And then noia is mind. So it is to go beyond the mind or to change one's mind. It is the idea about this is changing your mind about who Christ is and believing in him. Instead of focusing on who sin is greater, focus on coming to know who the Lord is. So when we see this verse where it's saying specifically to repent, it's metanoia or metanoeo. Repent repentance, right? It's talking about changing your mind. And in the context of this verse, Christ is talking about how every evil, every deed, every sin in the eyes of God is seen as equal. Now I know here on the earth, that's very hard for us to fathom, right? Stealing \$1 is different than stealing \$10,000, but it is still sin in the eyes of God. It's still missing the mark, so to speak. And in our application of this, we can realize that repentance, again, is part of the process of believing in the Lord. I realize that very often you'll see a lot of people who say repentance as in repent of your sins. Well, when you hear that, it's change your mind about sin. Does that make sense? Right? Repent of your sin. Repent and believe would be change your mind about Christ, right? Change your mind and believe. So turn your mind, turn your heart to the Lord. And it can be true in many cases. We must remember that the core concept here is the idea of repenting, repentance, repentance, changing of one's mind. Why did I put a butterfly up here? You heard the word metamorphosis, right? Where you see a caterpillar, right? How it transforms meta-changing, a morphosis, right? Morphous to change form. And in a similar manner, metanoia would be the changing of one's mind. I didn't want to put a transforming of the brain.

I don't know what that would look like here. So a butterfly serves as a really, in my mind, a better visual representation of changing one's mind. It's just like how in scripture says, do not be conformed of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your what? Your mind, right? Change your mind about who Christ is. I want you to really changing of what's one's mind. That is the representation. And I hope that when you think of repentance, maybe you'll think of a butterfly next time. And at this time, I'd like for us to turn to our third verse, which is going to be in 2 Corinthians 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 20.

And this is going to be found on page 1037 in your ESV, the Bible. Oh, 1140. 1146.

Keeping you guys on your toes or is it the other way around, right? All right. 1146. There you go.

[20 : 39] Second Corinthians chapter 5 verse 20. So that's page 11, 1148. Let's turn there. Forget what it says on the screen. We need to know really where it's at.

Okay. Let's start from verse 18. Okay. It says here, all this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. Let's finish off in that last one. For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. Very powerful language in here. We've talked about repentance. We've talked about repenting, right?

Meta-noia, right? To change one's mind. And in changing one's mind, when we come to believe in the Lord, we should become ambassadors for Christ. So here it's talking about being reconciled to God, right? Reflection and repentance. And this is the verse where the apostle Paul is urging those who know Christ to be ambassadors for Christ. So what does it mean to be an ambassador? It means to be a representative of Christ, right? So I put this image here. It's probably not the best of images, but you get the idea, right? Being an ambassador for Christ, being a light in the darkness, carrying out the work and the mission, right? To go out to make disciples to proclaim the gospel, to do this all for Christ. There's this very important idea which is to be reconciled to Christ. And since we are a new creation when we believe in the Lord, we are saved by grace through faith. And we are encouraged to spread the good news of the gospel to others. How are you a representative? How are you an ambassador for Christ? The word to be reconciled has a similar idea of being changed, but it's the idea of restoration. When you think of reconcile, right? When you think of accounting almost or banking, right? You want to reconcile. In this case, it's restoration with the Lord. In other words, when you hear someone say, make your life right with God, that would be being reconciled is to have your life right with God. So reconciliation is the restoration of a relationship. And it means the relationship with God. And I want us to make note that when we're reading this verse, Paul is making an appeal for us to be reconciled in Christ.

This is one of those verses where you have the idea of personal accountability and responsibility to believe in the Lord. I cannot force you to believe in the Lord. You must come to that decision on your own. This is one of those things, one of those verses, right? Where it says, going back to the verse, we implore you on behalf of Christ. That's translated implore is we beg you to be reconciled with Christ. When's the last time you've begged someone to come to know the Lord?

[24 : 46] Right? I mean, I know there's obviously different approaches and how we share in the good news of the gospel, but this is where the apostle Paul is saying, hey, look, this is how important it is to be reconciled to the Lord. How important it is for us, for this change in our minds to happen to believe in the Lord. So this is one of those verses.

It's about us making that decision. Again, I cannot make that decision for you. What I can do though is pray for you. I can share in the word of God and I can show you it's like planting the seeds, right? And in the same way, that is what we are called to do. When we think of evangelism, when we think of sharing in the good news of the gospel to others, think about the relationships that you have. Sometimes it is through opening the Bible. I'll tell you a really short story here here. In my time in Hawaii, there is an individual that I met who did not know the Lord and had a very, say a very small view of scripture. Does the Bible say this? It had to do with God's love, right? That's a very common one. And I come to find out that this person worked at a church, was a church secretary, and I'm not saying all church secretaries are this way, but this particular individual didn't open a Bible before, worked in a church, never opened a Bible before, and didn't know the gospel story. Now, how that happened, I have no idea. But it was in that moment in sharing, well, what does scripture have to say? Let's go, they were asking about 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

Well, can we expand it a little more on John 3.16? There was more talk about it, but just that little moment. Did this person believe in the Lord and they were saved? I don't think so, but maybe they did. And all I know is that the seed was planted, though. Taking that time and being intentional with someone, that's what matters. And saying, hey, look, I know there's a lot of stuff you're working through, but I'm still going to be here and pray for you. And if you ever have a question, here's my number, you can text or call me. That interaction only happened once. And it might have been the only time that ever happened. And I still pray for this individual. I don't want to give names, but it's the idea with that. And so it is in times like this, where we should be encouraged to come to know the Lord and to have our minds changed about him, to believe in the Lord and be saved. We should take time to reflect upon our everyday living and our own lives. And let us consider the idea of repentance. We've seen in our first reading from the book of Joel, the importance of turning to the Lord, regardless of what bad things are happening in the world, regardless of locusts or regardless of war, famine or whatever it is that's happening in life. You still have the opportunity. Turn to the Lord before it's too late. And then we find in Luke, we found about this idea about metanoia. Salvation is a matter of coming to know the Lord and believing in him. Do you have heart knowledge of who the Lord is? Or do you just know Jesus as this cool, you know, hipster guy with long hair? I mean, how do you view the Lord? We've also seen that, again, no matter what happens in the world, there's still time, but we don't know how much time we'll have here on earth. So be encouraged to make that decision for Christ. There's the understanding that in the Gospel of Luke, with that tower that fell down and the slaughtering that happened from Pilate, focus on repentance. And it's almost as though Christ was saying, thank God, this didn't happen to you. Now come to know the Lord. That's kind of harsh. It really is, but it's the truth.

Again, let's not ignore though, in saying that, let's not ignore bad events that happen. Christ calls for us to change our mind about who he is. And when bad things happen, it goes to show how precious life is. Maybe you have once believed that Christ, maybe you only know Christ is just a cool guy or a cool teacher. Maybe you've believed that and you need to change your mind as seeing Christ as Savior, as Messiah, as Lord. Perhaps you need to repent and come to see that the Lord is good, that he is gracious, kind, merciful, slow to anger, and abounds in that steadfast love.

Maybe you need to come and see that Christ died on the cross for all of our sins, that he performed these wonderful miracles that he taught many parables and he spoke of being the Son of Man and he spoke about hell as well. Maybe you just need to simply reflect on your heart and ask God what needs to be changed in your heart, in your mind, and even in your own life. How can God renew your spirit? How can God transform your mind?

[30 : 36] How can God work in your life? And we learn in that second Corinthians reading how we are to be an ambassador or a representative of Christ that we are to implore, we are to beg people to be reconciled with Christ. Now, granted again, relationships, conversations, in that particular sense, yes, beg. In Christ there is salvation and there is restoration that happens in him.

Let this be a call for repentance for those of you who do not know the Lord and for those of you struggling or you're on an uneasy path. Maybe you've seen tragic things that have happened and maybe it's time to focus on to the Lord or reflect on how God is working in your own life.

Even when we don't see it and I'm reminded of John chapter 20 verse 29, which goes on to say, have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. That is such a hard passage. But I know for many of us we would have loved to see water turn into wine. We would have loved seeing the healing of the sick, the mute, right, the deaf being able to hear, the blind being able to see. Seeing Jesus Christ walk on water would be amazing.

Seeing Lazarus come out and being raised from the dead man. I hope we would have, we all would want to see that but as that verse says, blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. And that's a very powerful verse. And as we are beginning this Lenten season and this sacred journey, I would like to encourage and invite all of you to be on this Lenten journey to Easter. This time for us to reflect on the Lord and to be on this spiritual journey to Christ and in believing in Christ, be on that spiritual journey with Christ. Take this time to focus on your spiritual walk with the Lord. And I encourage that you take to heart with these three verses have to say in regards to repentance and reflection and also act upon them. Whether this is through turning to God, focusing on your heart, repentance or spreading, sharing the good news of the gospel to others, be encouraged to live out the message from this morning. Maybe you need to spend time with the Lord and connect with him, open the word of God, pray. Maybe you need to be in

Christian community with other believers in Christ. Maybe you need to just really soak in the fullness of God's word. Maybe there needs to be restoration in your life. In any sense, this season, it is not just about preparing for Easter. It is a reminder of Christ's life, his works, the suffering, the death, the burial and the resurrection on the third day. It is about hearing the call from God and respond by having that active faith. Let this lent be a time where we draw close to God, but also may we be ambassadors of Christ's unfailing love. Let's pray together.

[34 : 24] And Father, as we conclude our time this morning, we ask that you are with us as we leave this place. Let the word of truth, let the seeds of transformation, may they change our minds and our minds to know you and to grow in you. May our hearts be softened to live and to love like you.

May we come to know you, may we believe in you, may we grow in faith in you, and may we be encouraged to do good in the name of Jesus Christ. We ask that we can reflect on this message and on this teaching of your word, that our minds can continue to be molded in you, that we can have that faith in you and grow in you. We ask Father that you are with us throughout this Lenten journey, this sacred journey towards you. May we draw near to you in our lives. It is in the name of Christ, our Redeemer, that we pray and we all say together, Amen. Amen.

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May God's blessings be with you.