

New Repentance

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 August 2020

Preacher: James Barnett

[0 : 0 0] Oh no, what have I done? In the classic 2002 movie, Spider-Man, the young Spider-Man has a chance to stop a thief, but instead chooses to let him go.

He lets him get away only for that thief to end up killing his uncle. I'm sorry if I've spoiled the movie for you, but the movie's 18 years old, it's okay. Spider-Man has this moment when he realizes, oh no, what have I done?

And for the rest of his life, it is shaped by his guilt, trying to make up for this mistake that cost his uncle's life, trying to deal with his sin, trying to find redemption.

His whole superhero future is because he is trying to pay the cost of his past sins. Have you felt that before? Not the being bitten by a radioactive spider part, but that gut-wrenching feeling of realizing that you are at fault.

You've let a friend down. You've been responsible for hurting a person close to you. And then thinking, how do I fix this? How do I make amends for my mistake?

[1 : 2 2] Like, you know, I've let my kids down, so I'm going to take them some sliced fruit. I'm going to, oh, let's go to Macca's kids. I'm going to buy her flowers. I'm going to buy her jewelry.

So when I go and say, sorry, I've got something to give her, so that she'll actually forgive me. When it comes to our relationship with God, what happens when we realize what we have done to God?

That we are responsible for the death of his son, for the murder of God himself. Is it just enough for us to say sorry? The great reformer, Martin Luther, was famously so worried about his guilt and his death that he became a monk.

Is this what we should do? We should all, you know, just enter ministry so we can somehow pay for our sins. Today we are continuing in our series on the book of Acts, seeing what living in the new world looks like.

And today we see what apology is. We see a new repentance. The people in Jerusalem realize what they have done to Jesus and they are cut to the heart.

[2 : 3 8] And we see what it means to repent, to say sorry and to be forgiven. Today we'll see what to do when we have that, oh no, what have I done moment.

And we'll be reminded what it means to repent and how wonderful it is to have a God who deals with our sin once and for all. We're going to be three points this morning.

The first is seeing the requirements for repentance. So the disciples have done what Jesus told them to do in Acts chapter one.

They were told to wait in Jerusalem until Pentecost. And they've done that. Pentecost means 50. And so Pentecost is 50 days after Passover, a famous Jewish festival, Passover, when they remembered what God did passing over their sins.

50 days after that is 7 times 7 plus 1, which is where they get 50, the Pentecost from. And so we see what happens on this day.

[3 : 46] Acts chapter 2, verse 2. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

This is a massive, dramatic moment in the history of the church. This was not just a simple breeze that blew through the house, but it is a violent wind. In the Old Testament, the word for the Spirit and wind are the same word.

It's ruach. It's the same word. And so we see in the Old Testament that God made Adam come to life by breathing into him. And this rushing wind is God's life-giving Spirit coming to the apostles.

We see tongues of fire coming to rest on these men. And again, fire is a common image of God. You only have to think back to, you know, Moses and the burning bush. And so the Holy Spirit comes upon these men so that they could be about God's mission.

[4 : 58] Last week with Steve, in chapter 1, we saw that Jesus was sending his disciples, his apostles, out into the world. To Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

But he wasn't going to send them out unprepared or unequipped. They would have the Holy Spirit. They were a witness to what they had seen about Jesus, equipped to share the good news to the ends of the earth.

And the Holy Spirit fills them here so that they begin to speak in other languages. And I love this part of the Bible. If you've heard me speak about this kind of thing before, I've prayed for this because I really want to be able to speak Mandarin Chinese.

And learning it takes time. And I really wish that had happened to me. But here it happens. God miraculously gifts these people so that they can speak other languages.

And they're speaking about God's mighty deeds. And they're making such a commotion about God in other languages that people around them hear and gather. Verse 5.

[6 : 04] Now, they were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment because each one heard their own language being spoken.

Utterly amazed, they asked, aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Luke, the author, is making a real point in verse 5 explaining that there were God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven in Jerusalem.

They were there because of the religious festivals, Passover, and then Pentecost. And the story of the Old Testament from the Tower of Babel all of the way through to their exile had been a history of disobedience.

They disobeyed God over and over. And he scattered them at the Tower of Babel. He sent them into exile in their history. Those who should have been living in the promised land had been spread across the known world.

They've grown up in foreign countries speaking languages not their own, but they are all gathered for Pentecost and for Passover. And God uses his disciples to speak to his scattered people who have gathered for this moment.

[7 : 23] The Holy Spirit brings unity where there was division. The list of people that had gathered was impressive. Verse 9. Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya near Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and converts, Cretans and Arabs.

We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own language. Have you ever had that feeling when you're on holidays overseas if you can remember being what overseas is like?

And you have this moment in a non-English speaking country if that's your first language where you don't understand what everyone's saying around you. It feels very foreign because it is.

And then off in the distance you hear someone speaking your language. You hear, you know, someone speaking English if you're in a non-English speaking country and it's just like, oh, they will understand me. They know what it is like.

And there's just a feeling of home and resonance. I can imagine that for these people. These Jews whose first language is not the local language.

[8 : 39] But now they are hearing the good news of God in their own language. Some just think that they were drunk. But Peter gets up and he speaks.

Peter, who had been very fearful, who had run at the first side of opposition, the Holy Spirit not only has enabled him to speak in other languages, the Holy Spirit fills Peter and is changing him from being someone who was fearful and stuttering to now someone who is able to get up in front of a crowd and preach.

And he explains what is going on. They're not drunk, it's nine o'clock in the morning, but this is what was prophesied long ago. What is happening right now we have been waiting for for years and years.

And he takes them step by step to see who Jesus is. And he quotes from the prophet Joel and from King David. From Joel, in the last days God says, I will pour my spirit out on all people.

God giving the Holy Spirit to all people. Again, this is an amazing dramatic shift from the Old Testament because previously God's Holy Spirit would come upon kings and prophets and a select few.

[10 : 02] But now the Spirit is given to young, to old, to male, to female. Peter is showing them in this first step that Joel promised that God would pour out the Spirit.

And that is exactly what's happening. Not only that, King David said that they should expect someone better than King David himself, someone who would not be abandoned to the realm of the dead, whose body would not see decay.

And that's not David. Verse 29, fellow Israelites, I can confidently tell you that the patriarch David died and he was buried and his tomb is here to this day.

Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of it.

Joel prophesied that the Spirit would come on all people and you are seeing it. David knew that the Lord and Messiah would die but not see decay and we have seen it, the apostles have seen it.

[11 : 09] And then Peter gets to the point, verse 36, therefore, let all Israel be assured of this, God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah, the one you crucified.

He is the Lord and he is the Messiah. And the crowd have that, oh no, what have we done moment. that painful, gut-wrenching, heart-cutting moment when they realised that they killed God.

Verse 37, when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, brothers, what should we do?

That phrase is so painful, cut to the heart, what do we do? We killed him. The one that we have been waiting for, God's chosen one, the Lord who would save us and we killed him.

What do we do? I can imagine their minds spinning with options of what they could do. Maybe it's just the Aussie male dad in me. I can fix it. I see one of my kids with a toy that's not a little bit broken, pass it to me, I'll fix it.

[12 : 33] Gaffer tape, hot glue, whatever it takes, I will fix it. I can imagine that feeling in the crowd. Surely there's something we can do. God sent him back, we'll love him this time.

We'll take care of him, we promise. We'll give more money to the synagogue, we'll give more sacrifices. We've stuffed up, but surely we can earn your forgiveness. 38, verse 38, Peter replied, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Repent, turn away from your sin, be baptized, be washed clean in the name of Jesus Christ, because this Jesus, he is still working now.

Your sins will be forgiven, they will be wiped out, and you will receive the Holy Spirit. No longer is God going to dwell in the temple, but in his people, they will be the temple.

You can have a gift. And that day, about 3,000 people were added to their number. This group started out divided by language and city of origin, but after they had repented and become part of God's family, they were all united together.

[13 : 58] Verse 44, all the believers were together and had everything in common. And twice it mentions that they were breaking bread together. God's Spirit has come, the gospel has gone out, thousands of people have been cut to the heart, they have repented and been baptized, and now they have God's new church.

There is nothing that they could do to make up for their sins, but forgiveness is offered, and they have a gift given. The Holy Spirit, God himself would dwell in them.

No one could have expected that, to go from that gut-wrenching moment of realization of what have I done, to be told that they are forgiven, and they're getting a gift instead.

This is wonderful joy, this is amazing freedom. We see this structure in chapter 2, where God works a miracle.

Somebody preaches the gospel, and then thousands get saved. It is the same that happens in chapter 3. A miracle happens, Peter preaches the gospel, and we see thousands get saved.

[15 : 12] In chapter 3, the miracle is a lame man being healed. This is our second point today, as we see the freedom that comes from repentance. One day, Peter, along with John, was heading to the temple, and there was a lame man begging.

Expecting to get money, verse 6, Peter said, silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.

Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk.

Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and praising God. The people see the man jumping and praising, and they rush to Peter and John.

And again, Peter gives context. He explains, he preaches about what God is doing in their midst. God is doing in the name of Jesus. Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or our godliness we had made this man walk?

[16 : 20] The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified his servant Jesus. Verse 15, you killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead.

We are witness of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know has been made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

And again, Peter gets to the point. He doesn't just talk about God just to talk about him, but talks about him, theologizes about him for the sake of people's lives.

Verse 19, repent and turn to God. So that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

This is a wonderful promise. Turn to God, repent. Your sin will be dealt with so that you can have times of refreshing. The healing of the lame man here is like a physical illustration of repentance.

[17 : 33] I don't think it's by coincidence that this story is in the middle of Peter preaching twice about repentance. God's spirit works in Jesus' name to set enslaved people free.

The lame man was enslaved to a broken body and when he is set free, his change is wonderful. He is jumping for joy. He is praising God.

Peter says, you have killed the author of life, but you can be free. You can be free as this man here jumping with joy, so repent.

And at the start of chapter 4, which we'll look at next week, again, we see thousands of people are saved. In chapter 2 and 3, we've been given a picture of what the new repentance looks like, that comes from the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus.

Our repentance is based not on what we offer, but on the completed works of Jesus. And we can jump, we can praise, and we can be refreshed, because our God forgives us.

[18 : 52] There are four ways that this helps us to think through what our repentance is. This is our third point today, what repentance is, what it actually looks like. So that's the first of the four things.

We're going to see four things about what repentance looks like. The first is what it actually looks like. The second, what the marks of a repentant person are. Third, the challenges to repentance.

And the fourth, the joy from repentance. Now, if you don't know Jesus yet, let me encourage you to be reflecting on the burden of carrying our own sin.

Because what God offers us is joy, and it is refreshing. And all he asks us to do is to repent and turn to him. So firstly, what does repentance look like?

Well, it's not just saying sorry. But repentance is rooted in an understanding of how sinful we are, of our actions, our emotions, our thoughts, our beliefs, and our way of life.

[20 : 03] Repentance is where we have a high view of God, where we see that he is the one who dictates what the best life is. And when we see that our life doesn't match what he would have for us.

A life of repentance begins with that gut wrenching, heart cutting recognition of having defied God by choosing what is wrong and hurtful to others, to ourselves, and to God.

A life of repentance is where we continually bring our life before God in his word, convicted by the Holy Spirit, and where we will continually have those, oh no, what have I done moments.

We will see, ah, this part of my life needs to change. That action, that thought, those desires don't actually line up with God's plan for my life.

Secondly, the marks of a repentant person. We've seen some of the marks of repentant people in the passage this morning. We see people responding to Peter's teaching.

[21 : 20] We see them, we see the crowd asking, what should we do? A mark of a repentant person is that they are appalled by their sin. The crowd was cut to the heart.

They accept the consequences. They ask, what should we do? A repentant person doesn't demand forgiveness.

A person who knows that they are in the wrong and is saying sorry doesn't say, well, you know, sure, John, I'll pick on you. Sure, John, I've sinned against you. But because you're a Christian, you have to forgive me.

No, a repentant person knows that they can't demand forgiveness. But when they get it, they're amazed. And the marks of an unrepentant person are the opposite of these.

I think we can, well, I know at least I can often have a facade of repentance. I can apologize but not mean it.

[22 : 23] My sin doesn't really appall me. I don't hate it. I can say, do you know what, that thing that I did, it's fine. I can excuse my sin. Maybe we don't accept the consequences but we try and shift the blame.

You know, they demand forgiveness. You know, John, you really should forgive me. And forgiveness is not a gift, it is an expectation. The unrepentant person may just say sorry to fix the situation, not because they are sorrowful about what they have done.

But repenting is really hard. And that's the third thing we see about repentance here.

Repenting is challenging. And it's actually really challenging for us to deal with our sin and to understand its consequences. It's painful. And this is why we need God to help us.

This is why this repentance is new because it comes as a gift from God. It comes with the Holy Spirit coming upon us. The Holy Spirit works to convict us of our sin.

[23 : 35] We desperately need Him because otherwise it is impossible for us to face up to our sin. We will just be an unrepentant person who says sorry to fix situations.

Instead, we need to be cut to the heart by God's Word and God the Holy Spirit. Repenting is challenging because we can desire to protect ourselves.

I want to save face before God and before other people. So I can't confess. I will confess partly. I can shift the blame or shift fault.

I see it in me. I see it in my kids. I say to one of them, did you do this? And they say, he did it first. He told me to do it.

And I see that in myself. I have a saying that I'm going to keep saying to myself and to my family until I'm good at it, which is own your own stuff.

[24 : 43] Don't shift blame to others. Own it for yourself. Own it and repent of it. And ask the Holy Spirit to help change. Fourth, once we have had that, oh no, what have I done moment, a life of repentance is truly a joy.

We are accepted by God. He cherishes us. We are his valued people. We are dearly loved. We are accepted into the family just like those thousands were when they started the church.

They met together and we come into God's family. The burden of our sin is taken away and we can have times of refreshing.

We don't need to be fearful that admitting fault will ruin our relationship with God. God already knows what we are like. It's actually a picture of what authenticity is to truly know who we are.

and how dependent on God we are to admit our fault and to repent. And then we can jump for joy. We can leap.

[25 : 58] We can praise God. We can even do that this morning. As we sing in a moment, we can jump around. That's okay. We can do that. We can have joy because what should have destroyed us before God has been wiped away.

I know that I have plenty of challenges personally confessing my sin and you may be surprised to know this but I can certainly be a stubborn person.

I know, I can see the shock on all of your faces this morning. I know when I've been in the wrong with Alyssa, my wife, that it can be hard to confess.

I can much prefer to be stubborn and shift the blame and actually go, no, no, no, it was her fault. It's her fault. I know that when I've been in the wrong, I've hurt Alyssa, I've let her down.

I cannot want to admit that but there is something wonderful about confessing sin. When I say to her, Alyssa, I am sorry, I let you down, I did this and I was wrong and she forgives me.

[27 : 13] It is wonderful. It's like having a burden taken off your back and we are brought closer. We can have new levels of intimacy because there is no longer that burden that keeps me away from her.

I'm not sure if you've had this in a relationship before but I certainly have this. If there is conflict between Alyssa and I because I've done the wrong thing, I don't want to see her, I don't want to talk to her, I want to hide from her but when I confess, when I say sorry and there is forgiveness, we are brought closer, no longer am I hiding from her out of fear that she's going to point out my sin but that burden is taken.

How much more so with God that the burden of having a broken relationship is taken off and it is offered to us.

It's just like Peter holding out his hand to the lame man and saying do you want times of refreshing? Do you want to have times of joy?

Don't miss out on that oh no what have I done feeling. Don't run and hide from that because God uses his spirit to cut us to the heart to remind us of how we need to repent and we can come before our great God and repent not from fear but joy.

[28 : 47] Not because of who we are but because we have a loving and merciful God. Let me pray for us. Heavenly Father, Lord, you are so wonderful, you are so great.

you are so merciful that you have dealt with our sin and you offer us times of refreshing and joy.

Father, we ask that you would continually cut us to the heart. As we read your word, be working your spirit in us so that we know how we need to repent and what we need to repent of, Lord.

Father, continue to do this, sanctify us, Lord, so that we would have our burdens taken off, so that we can rejoice, so that we can stand before you when we meet you, Lord.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[29 : 57] Amen.