



## The Foundation of the Christian Faith

### Course: Salvation

#### Lesson Four

#### Title: Repentance

**Text:** 2 Corinthians 7:10 'For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world works death.'

**Introduction:** Two Greek words for Repentance

- 1) 'For godly sorrow works repentance (Greek: *metanoeo*) to salvation...' 2 Corinthians 7:10a.
- 2) '...not to be repented of (Greek: *metameloma*): but the sorrow of the world works death.' 2 Corinthians 7:10b.

What Godly repentance is not.

Repentance leading to salvation is more than regret over sin.

Meaning of Greek word '*metameloma*' meaning literally to change our concern ('meta' after and 'melo' to care). 'Not to be repented of'.

It means regret concerning a previous action.

It involves particular actions.

It does not necessarily involve a change of heart

It may not have any permanent character.

Biblical example of this kind of repentance. The repentance of Judas. Matthew 27:3 'Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,'

The word repented is '*metameloma*' meaning 'regret after'.

This is not repentance that brings salvation

It was merely a regret over selling the Lord for thirty pieces of silver.

**Introductory Illustration:** Examples of remorse.

A person may have great sorrow and remorse because of the consequences of sin.

- Person going to court – sorrow for what they have done
- Drug addict - at death's door.
- Thief - in prison
- Wife beater - harm inflicted upon spouse.
- Sexual immorality - sickness, divorce, shame.

This is not godly sorrow. It may only be a selfish reaction to the consequences of sin.

Godly repentance is more than remorse or regret.

Godly repentance is a complete change of mind.

It is a turning away from sin to faith in Christ.

#### Exposition of repentance

1. The meaning of repentance
2. The call to repentance
3. The fruit of repentance

#### Main Points

##### 1. The meaning of repentance.

Greek '*metanoeo*' means literally 'to change one's perception' ('*meta*' after and '*noeo*' to perceive).

Repentance is a complete change in the way we think.

It must involve the heart, which is the centre of our being.

- It means a complete change in the way we think about sin. It is recognising there are 2 kingdoms - the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. To serve sin is to serve the devil. Sin is not harmless fun. It is part of the kingdom of evil. It is the enemy of God.
- It means a complete change in the way we think about ourselves. We are the enemies of God born in bondage as the servants of sin. We are sinners - so we understand that we are enemies in the sight of a holy God, Romans 3:23 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' Repentance is more than saying sorry over particular actions. It concerns our nature and not just what we have done. Ephesians 2:2-3, 'Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of

disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.'

- It means a complete change in the way we think about God. He is holy and righteous and must of necessity judge sin. God cannot deny Himself. We are condemned - so we understand our peril. That we are lost without Christ and without hope in the world. Ephesians 2:12, 'That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:' It is to see that sin is always against God.  
(Joseph) Genesis 39:9, 'There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'  
(David) Psalm 51:4 'Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that You might be justified when You speak, *and* be clear when You judge.'

Freedom in Christ requires complete separation from sin. Godly repentance will always produce the desire to forsake sin and the desire to be forgiven of sin.

Repentance is continuous. It is a changed mentality that continues throughout a person's life. There is no going back. Remorse will always go back because it never left selfish desires, 2 Peter 2:22 'But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.'

**Story:** Martin Luther's 95 Theses.

Luther saw repentance as a continuous event. He regarded the whole of the Christian life as a life of repentance. First thesis: 'Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said Repent, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.'

An indulgence could not remove the need for continuous repentance.

**Question:** In what way is repentance continuous?

- Repentance is continuous because a person who has repented and has faith in Christ cannot have the same relationship with sin as an unrepentant sinner. 1 John 1:6, 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:'
- Repentance is continuous because the call to repent is given to believers as well as to the unsaved. The Corinthian Church needed to be repentant over the sin that they had accepted in the Church. 2 Corinthians 7:9, 'Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.'  
The Lord called on churches in the book of Revelation to repent, Revelation 2:5; 16; 21; 22; 3:3; 19.

**2. The Call to Repentance.** Matthew 9:13 'But you go and learn what it means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'

**Testimony:** Gospel message is more than 'Jesus loves you'.

Some years ago when I was preaching on repentance, I made the remark that 'the gospel message is not Jesus loves you'. As soon as I said this a man who did not agree with my preaching shouted 'yes it is'. I answered the man by telling him that Jesus loved the rich young ruler but he still went away sorrowful. Luke 18:23, 'And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.'

The message 'Jesus loves you' is a great message but this message alone cannot save,

The gospel message is the message of repentance and faith in Christ.

It is this message that saves and God is calling all people to repentance. Acts 17:30, 'And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men every where to repent:'

This is the good news that Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

The message of repentance is unpopular because

- It means we are condemned sinners without Christ. But when we understand that we are condemned sinners then the Good News is that Jesus came to save sinners. 1 Timothy 1:15 'This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.'
- It has a negative view of mankind. This pessimistic view of human nature stands opposed to the evolutionary teaching of progressive improvement. Some years ago I read the words of one preacher who said that he would not lower people's self esteem by telling them they are sinners. Popular preaching always seeks to raise self-esteem. But Paul wrote to Timothy, 'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.' 2 Timothy 4:2. We will have no problem with self-esteem when we realise that Christ lives in us, Colossians 1:27.
- It means that sin will not go unpunished. Repentance is necessary because:
  - (a) God hates sin, Psalm 5:4-5.
  - (b) There is pleasure in sin but the end is death, Hebrews 11:25; Romans 6:23.
  - (c) There is a wrath to come, 1 Thessalonians 1:10.
  - (d) Sinners will perish without Christ, John 3:16.

Repentance is not a negative message. It is a positive message. But there is no other way of salvation except by repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3. The Fruit of Repentance,** Matthew 3:8 'Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:' True repentance will be known by its fruit.

Difference between doing penance and repentance.

Penance seeks self-punishment to remove guilt but this is not the fruit of repentance.

Afflicting the body does not help in gaining victory over sin.

Self punishment can never remove guilt

- (i) Flagellants
- (ii) Afflicting the body to save the soul.
- (iii) Religious acts of penance

Remorse can produce acts of penance. But this is not godly repentance.

Penance is defined as 'an act of self punishment as reparation for guilt'. This is a selfish reaction to the consequences of sin.

Godly repentance produces godly fruit and it is always united with faith in Christ for forgiveness.

Godly repentance does not seek self-punishment but looks to Christ alone for forgiveness.

Godly repentance is sorrow over sin that leads to conversion - the turning away from sin and faith in Christ for forgiveness and salvation.

Repentance looks to Christ alone for forgiveness and the fruit of repentance will be seen by a changed mentality towards sin.

The fruit of repentance - turning away from a sinful life. The sinner must first turn away from sin to turn to Christ.

- The prodigal son left the pigs and went home to his father with a repentant heart - Luke 15:18 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you'.
  
- The repentant tax collector hit his breast and stood afar off crying out for mercy, Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
  
- Godly repentance in Zacchaeus produced the fruit of restitution - he restored fourfold. Luke 19:8 'And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.'
  
- The fruit of repentance goes beyond that which is required.  
The restitution of Zacchaeus regarding that which he had wrongly taken was a necessary fruit of repentance but Zacchaeus went beyond requirement. Giving half his goods to the poor and restoring fourfold was generosity out of a heart of thankfulness.
  
- True repentance will produce a willingness to forgive. Matthew 18:21-35, The parable of the unmerciful steward.  
The steward had a debt he could not pay. He cried for mercy but he was not repentant. Forgiveness was regarded by the unmerciful steward as merited through his ability to move his lord. He was therefore able to be harsh to one who was unable to move him.

Repentance unto life - evidence of new life. Acts 11:18 'When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.'

- The evidence of repentance unto life was the Holy Spirit working in the lives of the Gentiles. Peter was brought to Cornelius by the Holy Spirit. Cornelius was baptised with the Holy Spirit - he spoke in tongues. The Gentiles were baptised in water as a confession of their faith in Christ.
  
- The sorcerer Simon of Samaria was baptised and had confessed faith in Christ, but the disciples knew his repentance was not real when he tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit with money. Simon wanted to use the Holy Spirit to elevate himself. Simon was motivated by worldliness - lust and pride. The words of Simon revealed the absence of true repentance in his life. (Acts 8:9-24)

**An example of godly repentance**

The fruits of repentance in the Church at Corinth.

*2 Corinthians 7:11 'For behold this selfsame thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort,...'*

*'...what carefulness it wrought in you',* Carefulness - diligence (*spoude*). The Corinthian Church were diligent in dealing with the sin.

*'...what clearing of yourselves',* Clearing - defence (*apologia*) Their actions were evidence of repentance.

*'...what indignation',* Indignation against sin (*aganaktesin*). They were indignant showing anger towards sin.

*'...what fear',* Fear of the Lord (*phobon*). They were motivated by righteous fear.

*'...what vehement desire',* Vehement desire (*epipotesin*). They were moved by great passion for righteousness.

*'...what zeal',* Zeal (*zelon*). Zealous for the Lord.

*'...what revenge!'* Revenge (*ekdikeyo*). Acting justly by inflicting some form of retribution.

*'In all things you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.'* Approved (*sunistemi*). Standing together in righteousness.

The repentance of the Corinthians was clearly evident. Godly repentance will produce the fruits of repentance. This is evidence that the life of Christ is in the believer individually and in the Church collectively.

### **Summary**

Godly repentance is more than sorrow over the consequences of sin. Repentance that leads to salvation...

- 1) ...is a complete change of mentality. It is a turning away from sin.
- 2) ...does not seek self-punishment but looks to Christ for forgiveness.
- 3) ...will produce the fruits of a changed life.

### **Lesson 4 (outline)**

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