

## REPENTANCE

This word is the action word for a person wishing to become a Christian. I am throwing out a challenge to you right at the beginning of this message. Without true repentance of the heart a person cannot become a Christian. A person may follow the Christian values, be a gentle and upright person, helps others and even devote their lives to others in selfless service. Keep themselves pure in their marriage vows, join a church and take part in its rituals and liturgy but still be outside what Jesus calls the Kingdom of God.

You may then ask who said that?

Jesus said

*At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? 3 **No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.** 4 Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 **No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.**"* Lk 13:1-5

The problem is sin. We do not call it that today. Rather we use words like shortcomings, slight defects, and white lies. God calls all wrongs - sin. The Scriptures go further and says "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,*". Which means all have lost the means to be able to communicate with God on a personal basis. In that un-forgiven state we are not part of the family of God. One scripture writer called us aliens from God's people and strangers.

*Remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (**By his death on the cross**)* Eph 2:12-13

Paul the writer of this text says plainly that something happened to bring us out from the cold and into the family of God.

Later Paul mentions aliens again when he says,

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. Eph 2:19-20*

## **WHAT IS REPENTANCE?**

The word means chiefly to emphasize the change of the will, the change of mind or of purpose. Two words are translated repentance. The first Greek word means a completely different way of thinking and behaving. Similar to conversion the change is so dramatic.

The other word translated repent means to feel sorry but no difference in behaviour or thinking is observed.

Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus repented in the second definition of the word without change in behaviour.

*3 When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, **he repented (he was sorry)** and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.4 He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself."5 Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. Mt 27:3-5*

This meaning is "To regret one's actions." But he did nothing to put it right with Jesus. It's a bit like being found out for doing something wrong like speeding. Regret being caught but no change in behaviour. Like the case of the Hume's at the moment. Hume asked his wife to take his penalty point's otherwise he would be banned from driving. Yet a few days later he was caught again and banned. No change in behaviour,

The other meaning of the word repentance is illustrated by the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus. The main principle was that he changed the way he thought and acted. Before his encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus he was an active

opponent of Christians now he is called to be an Apostle to the Gentiles and called to preach Jesus to them. From a self-righteous man to one who said, "I am the chief of sinners."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said of repentance that once a person repents of their sin pardon occurs instantly. I quote

"And this great and full pardon is also a pardon that is given instantaneously. In a moment, the guilt of the penitent sinner is forgiven. "His pardon at once he receives." The instant that faith is begotten in the soul, we are justified in the sight of God, and we can say, with the apostle Paul, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies" Rom 8:33. The believing penitent turns his weeping eyes to Christ upon the cross, gazes with mingled sorrow and joy upon the blood that flowed from his many wounds, places all his reliance upon the God-appointed seat of mercy, "the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world" John 1:29, and in that very moment all his iniquities are gone forever. The Lord has blotted them out, and driven them away, like clouds that have been dispersed by a tornado, and that can never be found again.

**THE MAIN SUBJECT OF JESUS' MESSAGE WAS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (God) and repentance. It was the only way into this kingdom.**

Not church membership, not baptism, not confirmation. Not any ritual has any benefit unless accompanied by repentance,

Listen to the words of Jesus

*"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."* Mk 1:15

I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Being as none are righteous before God, these so called righteous people who need no repentance are in fact self-deceived. Lk 5:32

The Apostle Paul adds;

*What then? Are we any better off? No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, 10 as it is written: "There is no one who is righteous, not even one; Ro 3:9-10*

THE CHURCH WAS REQUIRED TO DO ONE THING BY JESUS BEFORE HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN. THESE WERE HIS LAST WORDS

*...that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Lk 24:47*

In Victorian days, the last words spoken by people were deemed important.

Here are some of them that were recorded

**Elizabeth the First:** "All my possessions for one moment of time."

**Ludwig van Beethoven:** "Too bad, too bad! It's too late!"

**Thomas Hobbs:** "I am about to take my last voyage, a great leap in the dark."

**Socrates:** "All of the wisdom of this world is but a tiny raft upon which we must set sail when we leave this earth. If only there was a firmer foundation upon which to sail, perhaps some divine word."

**Sigmund Freud:** "The meagre satisfaction that man can extract from reality leaves him starving."

**Tony Hancock (British comedian):** "Nobody will ever know I existed. Nothing to leave behind me. Nothing to pass on. Nobody to mourn me. That's the bitterest blow of all."

**Voltaire (sceptic):** "I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life. Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!"

## CHRISTIAN LAST WORDS

**Jonathan Edwards:** “Trust in God and you shall have nothing to fear.”

**Patrick Henry:** “Doctor, I wish you to observe how real and beneficial the religion of Christ is to a man about to die . . .” In his will he wrote: “This is all the inheritance I give to my dear family. The religion of Christ which will give them one which will make them rich indeed.”

**John Owen:** “I am going to Him whom my soul loveth, or rather who has loved me with an everlasting love, which is the sole ground of all my consolation.”

**D. L. Moody:** “I see earth receding; heaven is opening. God is calling me.”

**Lew Wallace (author of Ben Hur):** “Thy will be done.”

**Alexander Hamilton:** “I have a tender reliance on the mercy of the Almighty, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am a sinner. I look to Him for mercy.”

**William Shakespeare:** “I commend my soul into the hands of God my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting; and my body to the earth, whereof it was made.”

**Martin Luther:** “Into Thy hands I commend my spirit! Thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth.”

**John Milton (British poet):** “Death is the great key that opens the palace of Eternity.”

**Daniel Webster (just before his death):** “The great mystery is Jesus Christ—the gospel. What would the condition of any of us be if we had not the hope of immortality? . . . Thank God, the gospel of Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light.” His last words were: “I still live.”

**Charles Dickens:** “I commit my soul to the mercy of God, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear children humbly to try and guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament.”

**Andrew Jackson:** “My dear children, do not grieve for me . . . I am my God’s. I belong to Him. I go but a short time before you, and ...I hope and trust to meet you all in heaven.”

**Isaac Watts (hymn-writer):** “It is a great mercy that I have no manner of fear or dread of death. I could, if God please, lay my head back and die without terror this afternoon.”

**REPENTANCE IS THE ONE OUTSTANDING STEP ONE CAN TAKE IN THIS LIFE. A MAN OR WOMAN MAKING THIS DECISION WILL DETERMINE THEIR LIVES FOR ETERNALLY.**

**All other sermons you have ever heard do not match up to a sermon on repentance. The style of other messages may be greater, the fun element more persuasive, the subject matter of the sermon of greater interest but Jesus preached repent, repent, repent. So must I as I have been commanded to.**

In the Early Church during the first sermon the Apostle Peter offered this advice to those enquiring to be Christians.

*Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Ac 2:38*

So not only are our sins forgiven by the work of Jesus on the cross but we receive God into our lives through the Person of the Holy Spirit This gives us the power we need to live the Christian life,.

Isaiah clearly showed the way to find God.

He said

6 Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.  
7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
And let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. Isa 55:6-7

The challenge therefore is this, Will you be part of the Kingdom of God today?