

Repentance - Part 1

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince's sermon highlights the essential role of repentance as a prerequisite for faith and salvation in the Christian life.

Duration: 28:23

Scripture: Isaiah 53:6, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 13:1-5, Luke 24:46-47, Acts 2:36-37, Acts 17:30

Topics: "Repentance", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, Derek Prince discusses the importance of repentance in the message of salvation. He highlights the role of John the Baptist as the forerunner who prepared the hearts of God's people for the coming of Jesus Christ. Repentance is emphasized as the first demand that Jesus made on his hearers, even before belief in the Gospel. The sermon also mentions the events of Pentecost and Peter's preaching, which brought conviction to the listeners and led them to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Christ.

Transcript

This is tape number 2011. Derek Prince speaks on the subject Redemption Plan and Fulfillment. This message is entitled Repentance.

Almost two thousand years ago, God sent his son Jesus Christ into the world to bring salvation to men. He was the savior that had been promised over the centuries through the prophets. The time of his coming was determined in the counsels of God.

And yet before Jesus could come and fulfill his ministry and bring the message that God had given him, another man had to go before him and prepare the way to be the forerunner. The message of this man was specifically to prepare the way of the hearts of God's people to receive the Messiah and his message. The name of this man was John the Baptist.

And he preached in the wilderness and he preached a very simple message. He made one demand on the people of God and that demand is summed up in the word Repentance. To me it has always been so significant that though the time of the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, was determined in the counsels of God.

Nevertheless the Messiah could not actually come until the hearts of God's people had been prepared to receive him. And the preparation of the hearts of God's people came through the ministry of John the Baptist. And the great requirement was Repentance.

This, I believe, shows as clearly as anything can do, the importance of Repentance. Jesus could not come and reveal himself and bring his message and fulfill his ministry until God's people had made a way for him in their hearts by meeting the condition of Repentance. Repentance is one of the great doctrines of the Christian faith.

And it's one which is very little understood and for that reason very little practiced. Many, many people are having a struggle with faith. They're seeking faith, they're praying for faith, they're going to preachers who can tell them how to receive faith.

But really their problem is not with faith, it's with Repentance. I'm convinced myself that 50 percent at least of people who are having trouble in obtaining faith have a great basic problem. They've never met the real requirement of Repentance.

I want to show you in our message that God invariably requires Repentance first. Repentance is the first move of any man back to God. If we look in Mark's Gospel chapter 1 and verse 15, we find the actual words that Jesus first preached.

Of course Jesus had been speaking and he'd conversed with many. But his first public preaching message is recorded in Mark 1 15. The previous verse says, Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled that God's appointed hour has come and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent ye and believe the gospel. The first actual demand that Jesus ever made on his hearers was not to believe but to repent. Repent ye and believe the gospel.

And that is invariably the order of scripture. Not believe first, nor believe only, but repent first and then believe. In his earthly ministry Jesus continued to lay tremendous importance on Repentance.

In Luke chapter 13 we read the first five verses. This is one of his conversations with people who came to him with questions. And the answer that he gives is very significant.

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things, I tell you nay. But except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.

Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem, I tell you nay. But except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Two rather dramatic and unhappy things had apparently taken place recently.

At some point some Galileans had been offering sacrifices and the Roman governor of the province, Pilate, had sent his soldiers and actually executed these men while they were in the act of offering sacrifice. So that the men's own lifeblood was spilled and mingled with the blood of the very animals that they'd offered in sacrifice. And this was such a terrible thing to happen that people came to Jesus and said, Was there something particularly bad about those men? Were they particularly wicked? Had they

done some very terrible crime? That this judgment came upon them.

Jesus said no, they weren't necessarily worse than anybody else. But I'll tell you this, unless you repent you'll perish the same way. And then he said, You heard about that tower that collapsed in Siloam? Crushed 18 men and they were killed instantly.

So do you think that they were worse than the rest? No, but I'll tell you this, unless you repent you'll perish likewise. Now the word perish in the scriptures is very rarely used merely of physical death. It speaks of more than that, it speaks of a soul banished from the presence of God, lost for eternity.

And Jesus said of those Galileans offering their sacrifice and slain in the very act of that religious duty, they perish. That shows us very, very clearly that religion is no substitute for repentance. Many, many people are practicing religion, who've never practiced repentance.

Religion is not a substitute. Jesus said though they died in the very act of offering sacrifice, they perished. Why did they perish? Because they had not repented.

And he brings it very, very practically and individually to each one of us. Except you repent, you'll perish. Those are the alternatives, to repent or to perish.

Then Jesus completed his earthly ministry and in fulfillment of the prophets, the will of the Father, he was crucified, buried and rose from the dead. And after his resurrection, he appeared to his disciples and he commissioned them. He told them that the gospel concerning his death and burial resurrection, was to be preached in all nations.

And these are the actual words that are recorded in Luke chapter 24 verses 46 and 47. He said unto them, thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Notice that the first thing that is to be preached, is not remission or forgiveness of sins, but repentance and remission of sins. And both alike are offered through the gospel, in the name of Jesus. So you'll notice that all through the earthly ministry of Jesus, the order never varied.

His first requirement was repent, believe the gospel. Preaching he said, the only two choices, repent or perish. When he rose from the dead, commissioned his disciples, he commissioned them to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins.

There is no authority in the gospel to preach forgiveness to those who have not repented. We move on to the day of Pentecost and the events recorded in Acts chapter 2. This records the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the gathering of a great crowd of Jews to hear this wonderful supernatural phenomenon of the Galileans speaking by the Holy Spirit languages, which they themselves did not understand, but which were understood by the Jews present. Then Peter stood up and preached that great message, which centered around the person and the work of Jesus Christ, his earthly ministry, his death, his burial, and then the testimony of his resurrection.

And he concluded with these words in Acts 2 36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now these words brought great conviction upon the hearers.

The scripture says in verse 37, Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? There's a clear request. Tell us, what does God expect us to do? We realize we're wrong, we're not rightly related to God, we're not in the favor of God, we're cut off. But we want to come back, we want to enter into the favor of God, we want to be accepted of God.

Tell us what we can do to amend our mistakes. And Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sin. Again Peter, the spokesman of God and of the church.

The first time the church of Jesus Christ was manifested in public. The first time that sinners came and said, what do we need to do? Peter came out with that key word, repent and then be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sin. And then we go on to the ministry of Paul, as that's recorded in the book of Acts, following on the great missionary to the Gentiles.

In Acts chapter 17 and verse 30. Paul is talking to these arrogant intellectuals in the city of Athens. He's telling them that they've been worshiping idols and images, that they've been deceived, that they were merely superstitious.

And he then gives them this requirement of God. In Acts 17 verse 30, the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. That's as universal a commandment as can ever be given.

God now commands all men everywhere to repent. That's one requirement from which no one is exempted, the requirement to repent. And a little further on in Acts chapter 20, Paul is speaking and he's reminding the leaders of the church at Ephesus of his ministry and his message, while he was with them in Ephesus.

And he says in Acts 20 verses 20 and 21, I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says I didn't keep back anything. I told you the complete truth, everything that God requires.

And my message was not first faith, but first repentance toward God and then faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no alternative to repentance. There is no way to bypass repentance and enter into true faith.

As I said, I will say again, in my experience as a minister counseling people, I think 50 percent of the problems that people have with faith, are not really problems with faith, they're problems with repentance. Now it's important that we understand what repentance means. Many people have got a wrong impression.

Many people think that repentance is primarily emotion. That is not so. We can go to the original languages of the scripture, both New Testament and Old Testament and take these words.

In the New Testament, the Greek word that's translated repent, means literally to change your mind or your way of thinking. It's to think differently. It's a decision that involves the way you think.

In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the word that we normally translate repent, means to turn or to return, to turn around, to turn back. And we could put these two together and say that repentance is decision followed by action. You've been living a certain way, you've been thinking a certain way, you have certain standards, patterns of behavior, habitual reactions, and you suddenly come to a stop.

You lay them down, you change your mind, you see things differently, you accept other standards. And having made this inward decision, you make it effective by action. You turn around.

Repentance is a turning around of 180 degrees. You were walking one way, the Bible says your own way. Now you're arrested, you're stopped short.

You have to turn around and start off in the opposite direction. It's a decision followed by an action. It's not an emotion.

Many, many people are waiting for an emotion. They're waiting for something to happen that they'll feel a certain way. This is a mistake.

As a preacher, I've seen many, many people get emotional. I've seen them come forward, maybe to the altar of a church, say a prayer, and sob a little, have an expression of emotion. But there was no change.

They didn't change their way of thinking. They didn't change their way of living. It wasn't a genuine repentance.

It was simply a kind of emotional release. But it didn't meet the requirements of God. And this is so very important, that we realize that there's something that we can do, that God requires us to do, and it doesn't depend on our emotion.

So many religious people are the slaves of their emotions. They feel good, they think they are good. If they feel lonely, they're lonely.

They feel defeated, they're defeated. Actually, one great way out of the slavery of the emotions, is the act of repentance. Say, I'm not going to let my emotions dictate to me.

I'm not going to be ruled by the way I feel. I'm submitting to another standard. The standard now, is God's standard.

What God says, will be the way I'll act, regardless of my feeling. It's a way of escaping from the slavery of your emotions. From the slavery of custom, and tradition, and the actions and standards of the people around about you.

You're no longer going to be ruled by those. You've chosen a new standard. That standard, is God's standard.

People may say, well, I'm really a pretty good person. I don't do much that's wrong. I'm pretty regular in my church attendance.

I've always tried to live by the golden rule. I've never been a criminal. Why should I repent? What's wrong with my life? And I'd like to show you, I think, the scripture which makes more clear than any other that I know.

Why we all need to repent. It's found in the 53rd chapter of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 53 and verse 6. All we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Now this is a great prophecy of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His finished sacrifice on the cross that was fulfilled historically, something like 700 years after the prophecy was given. And really the central verse of that great 53rd chapter of Isaiah, from the point of view of the context and the sense, is verse 6. All we like sheep have gone astray. There are no exceptions, all of us.

We have not necessarily committed crimes or immorality. But we have turned everyone to his own way. That's the universal guilt of the human race.

We've turned our own way. We're living by our own standards. And in turning to our own way, we have turned away from God's way.

And the bible uses a very strong word for this. The Lord hath laid on him, Jesus, the iniquity of us all. The word iniquity is one of the strongest in language.

It means rebellion, self-will, a rejection of God. And that's precisely what the entire human race has been guilty of. Self-will, rejecting God and his way and his standard.

And on the cross, God visited the rebellion of the human race and all its evil consequences upon Jesus. That's why he died. He died as the rebel substitute.

He died as the one who had taken your place and my place. And now God says, you're required to repent, to turn back from your own way, to turn around, to face God, to submit to God, to yield yourself in obedience to God. When a person has truly repented, he doesn't argue with God.

When you're in that attitude and frame of mind, where you want to argue with God and dispute what God says, you haven't truly repented. And there will not be real peace in your heart, nor harmony in your life, as long as there's an inward war between you and God. You may be struggling for faith, you may be trying for sweet feelings, you may want to feel good, but that isn't the answer.

The answer is, repent, change your mind, make a decision, turn around, submit to Almighty God. And he will show you the next step. Repentance is not all that God requires, but it is his invariable first requirement.

If you like to put the order up that we noticed in those earlier scriptures, Jesus said when he first began to preach, repent and believe. Now I'm going to write a big, big R for repent, because it's not going to change. Jesus said, repent and believe.

First repent, then believe. While he was preaching in the 13th chapter of Luke, he said, repent or, what's the alternative, perish. After he rose from the dead and commissioned his disciples to go out and preach, he said, repentance and remission, or forgiveness of sins.

On the day of Pentecost, when they said, men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter said, repent and be baptized. And Paul said to the people of Ephesus, repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. So, God never varies this initial requirement.

Repent and believe. Repent or perish. Repentance and forgiveness of sins.

And notice, both are offered in the name of Jesus. It's God's mercy that offers you repentance. And on the basis of repentance, he offers you forgiveness.

Repent and be baptized. It is no use to be baptized, if you have not repented. All that does is turn a dry sinner into a wet sinner.

And Paul said, repentance and faith. I think you'd agree with me that many, many times, in presenting the gospel, we've misrepresented God. And we've wondered sometimes why the results that we thought ought to follow, didn't follow.

And I believe there's a good answer there. We've missed out the first requirement. The change of mind.

The decision. I'm going to stop going my own way. I'm going to stop living by my own standards.

It's not my values that count. It's God. I was preaching in a place on the opening chapters of Romans.

I was laying down as clearly as I could, God's evaluation of the conduct of the human race. That we are all guilty. We are all without excuse.

And a lady came up to me afterwards, and she wanted to dispute this with me. And she said, you know Mr. Prince, I think. And I was a little brusque.

I interrupted her. I said, what you think isn't important. What I think isn't important.

It's what God says that's important. But most of us attach great importance to what I think. Until we've repented.

When you've repented, you don't answer God back. You don't say, oh God, but I think. The scripture says, nay but oh man, who art thou that replyest against God? Who are you to argue with God? The Apostle James says, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.

And receive with meekness the engrafted word of God, which is able to save your souls. We have to lay aside certain things. We have to lay aside uncleanness, sinfulness.

We also have to lay aside naughtiness. When is a child naughty? When it answers back. And God's children are often naughty.

They answer him back. They argue. They say, oh but.

I was speaking to a lady just two or three days ago. She came to me for counsel. So she said.

In actual fact, I think she just wanted to unload her feelings on somebody and I was close. When I began to offer her the advice that scripture gives for one in her situation, every time I quoted scripture, she said, oh but. I said, as long as you say, oh but, the word of God is not going to help you.

It's lay aside your naughtiness. Lay aside your argumentativeness. Receive with meekness God's word.

It'll do you good. But that act of laying aside our own way, our own opinion, our own will, our own standards, submitting to God, that is repentance. Please stop your machine at this point and turn the tape

over.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10802.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/derek-prince/repentance-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net