

Prepare The Way

by Freddy Bafuka

This sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine repentance as a preparation for the second coming of Jesus Christ. It highlights the need for radical repentance, restitution, and producing fruits of repentance in one's life. The speaker stresses the significance of open heavens, the anointing of God, and hearing the comforting voice of God as blessings for the repentant. The message calls for a revival through sincere repentance and ends with a prayer for healing and restoration for those in need.

Scripture: Luke 3:7, Luke 3:22, Luke 19:1, 2 Corinthians 7:10, Genesis 6:5, Revelation 22:12, Revelation 3:19, Matthew 3:8, James 5:16

Topics: "Genuine Repentance", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

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Transcript

Hello, well, can everybody hear me? So it is a blessing to be here. And by the way, that was great, the music. Praise the Lord.

Why don't we give them a hand? Let's say that we appreciate them using their talents for the Lord. Like Daniel said, we do go back a while. It kind of says how old we are.

And I do appreciate Pastor Gus and the ministry that is happening here. You would think that by default, every pastor loves the Lord. But as you get to know people in the church role, you realize that that's not always true.

That's unfortunately not always the case. And I appreciate it when I meet a man who is first a Christian, who loves the Lord, who wants to walk with Jesus, and isn't just trying to go through the motions of being a pastor. So I appreciate that in Pastor Gus, that he's a man who loves the Lord, a man who fears the Lord.

It's invaluable. And he, myself, and Pastor Steve, Senior Pastor at Calvary Chapel, we pray together once a month. And so it's been a real great blessing to have that relationship going.

So I'm just going to pray. And we will begin in Mark, chapter 1. You can turn there while I pray. Father God, we thank you this morning for being here with us, Lord.

Father, we come and we humble ourselves before you. Father, we pray that you will speak to us. Lord, Father, we're not here to hear from a man.

We're not here, Lord, to go through motion. Lord, we want to hear from heaven. We want you, Lord, to transform us, to bring us, Lord, closer to you.

Lord, Father, we want to prepare the way for a great move of your Spirit in our midst. So we pray that our hearts, Lord, will be open to you, Lord. Father, I pray that everything I say, Lord, this morning will come from you, Lord.

I pray, Lord, that it will be mixed with love, Lord, and compassion, Lord, yet full of truth, Lord. Father, I ask that you will do that. I pray, Lord, that you'll silence every other voices, Lord.

I pray that your voice will be heard in our hearts, Lord. We pray, Father, that we will take, Lord, that everyone here will hear what is it that you intend for them to hear this morning. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

So Mark, chapter 1, from verse 1. You can turn, if you don't have a Bible, share with somebody next to you. Share with someone next to you. Mark, chapter 1, verse 1. The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It is written in Isaiah the prophet, I will send my messenger ahead of you who will prepare your way. A voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. And so John came baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin.

The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him, confessing their sins. They were baptized in the river by him in the Jordan. Confessing their sin, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

John wore clothing made of camel hair with leather belt around his waist and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message, after me will come one more powerful than I, the tongues of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

So the greatest event that's ever happened in the world from the beginning of the world to now, the greatest thing that has ever happened is that the son of God came into this world. One day God took on human body and came into this world. And there has never been something greater than that, that has ever happened, not the American Revolution, not the French, this is the greatest thing that has ever happened.

And the greatest thing that can happen in a person's life is that Jesus will come into that life. The greatest thing that can happen to you, the greatest day in your life, it is the day when Jesus Christ comes and enters in and becomes Lord of your life. And you know, it is not the day, I'm not talking about somebody getting religion, becoming religious or joining a church or getting into Christian rituals.

I'm talking about when God really comes into the heart of a person. That's the greatest day in the life of that person. And that is the gospel, that is the good news.

The good news is that God Almighty can come and live inside of you. The good news is that God who created the whole universe, He can actually come and dwell inside of you. That's the greatest day in the life of a person.

And I have heard people share, it is great to hear the testimonies of people when people say what changed in their lives, what the amazing things that happened when they turned to the Lord. I think somebody just turned off the light by mistake. Yeah, I think the computer screen hit the thing.

So, that is the greatest day. Well, let there be light. So that is the greatest day in the life of, it's when Jesus Christ comes and a person becomes born again.

That is the good news of the kingdom. However, here is the thing, here is the thing that is often missed about that. When Jesus came the first time, it was necessary for God to send someone to prepare the way for him to come.

God sent someone to go and prepare the way for Jesus to come. I remember years ago, some years ago, the sitting president of the United States was coming to visit our campus here in Cambridge. And I remember going on campus that day, and you could tell that someone important was there.

There were agents standing all over the place, doors that you normally can enter in, you couldn't enter it. You had to go around this way, around that way. There were SUVs, mean looking SUVs parked all over the place in places you normally don't see cars.

You knew, you didn't need to be told, you knew someone important was on that campus that day. And these people took over the place. It disrupted a lot of things.

It was the people of this world preparing the way for a king of this world to visit our campus. Now Jesus is the greatest of all kings as we were singing earlier today. When he comes, there also needs to be preparation for his arrival, amen.

When Jesus comes, there has to be preparation for his arrival. And oftentimes, people are told, well, just receive Jesus, invite him to come into your life, accept him, that is true. I was told that, I prayed and I was pointed to John chapter one, to those who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave them the power or the right to become children of God.

And I believed that and I was saved that day. I was 10 years old, I was sincere, I believed it, that if I invited Jesus into my life, he will come and he came. And he's been there ever since, okay.

However, the part that ought to be said before that, before he comes, the way has to be prepared for him. And so how did John prepare the way for Jesus? Here it is. And so John came baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sin.

The way is prepared for Jesus to come into the heart of a person by repentance. The first time Jesus came, when he came into this world, God sent John, John prepared the way by teaching people to repent and baptizing those people with a baptism of repentance. When Jesus comes into the life of a person today, that coming of Jesus ought to be preceded by a preparation.

The way has to be prepared for Jesus to enter the heart of a person, the life of a person. And that preparation is repentance. Repentance paves the way for Jesus to enter the life of a person.

Oftentimes you hear people say, well, I prayed and I prayed, I received Jesus in my heart. I asked Jesus to come in, but I don't know if he came in, I'm not sure. You know, often why is it that there's so much uncertainty? Because it was not preceded by repentance.

They jumped to believing. They jumped to trying to invite Jesus to come into their life. And years later, you see Christians and something is lacking in their lives.

They do not make progress. They don't seem, their Christian lives seem to turn around. I believe a lot of that is due to the fact that this was overlooked.

Here is what Mark says. Mark says, this is the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ. What's at the beginning of the gospel? The beginning is not believe.

The beginning is this, God sends a man to prepare the way by repentance. That is the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel that begins with accept him and then he's automatically gonna come up is a partial gospel.

Is a gospel that does not begin where the gospel truly begins. It begins by God sending someone to prepare the way and calling people to repent. What is repentance? It is here, prepare the way verse three, a voice calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.

Repentance is making crooked paths straight. Everybody, all of us have something crooked about our lives. We have some crooked way about us.

And when Jesus is coming into the life of a person, there has to be an honest and genuine process of beginning to make the path straight. The other way that you can think of it is this. It is not a very profound analogy, but it makes the point.

When you have a plane, a plane is about to land. You need a runway. That runway has to be straight.

It's gotta be levels, gotta be big enough, deep enough. And the larger the aircraft, the longer and wider and deeper runway you need to have. So not all planes can land on all airports.

There are some airports where a Boeing 737 cannot land because the runway is too tiny, it's too short. And so Jesus, when he comes into a life, that's a big plane. That's a big aircraft.

And the way has to be cleared out for him to arrive. And that process cannot be overlooked. I mentioned to you that when the president came to visit our campus, imagine if they told him you can come, but we're not changing anything.

We're not gonna close any doors. We're not gonna disrupt our campus life, but we'd love for you to come. Would he have come? No, he would not.

He'd say, if you guys want me to come, you let me take over your campus. You prepare the way, you let my people come and prepare the way for me to arrive. And so in the same way, Jesus Christ, the Lord, the King, when he comes in, there has to be repentance that prepares the way for him to come.

Now, what is repentance? Repentance at a basic level means that I turn. Turning, when I turn to God, I turn away from something. So if I'm turning this way to my left, I am turning away from my right.

And if I'm turning away from my right, I'm turning to my left. So all of us were born like this. When we're born and came into this world, we live by one principle, what I want.

When you and I came from our mother's womb and we came into this world, we came crying. We came saying, I want something. We came craving for attention.

And we live our lives, all of us more or less, by doing what we want. At the end of the day, I do what pleases me. It is my way.

If I wanna do it, I'll do it. If I don't wanna do it, I'm not gonna do it. I have the right to do what I please.

And we live in a society like that, where people say, well, if it doesn't make you happy, you don't like it, what should you do it? You don't like your husband anymore, well, why should you stay? You can get a divorce and leave. You don't like your wife anymore? Okay, what should you stay and be unhappy? Leave her. You don't like telling the truth? Well, it's okay if you lie.

That's the way all of us were brought up. We came into this world desiring to do what we want. When we repent, we turn away from that mode of living to living by a new principle.

Now it is, what does Jesus want? Now the ruling principle of a person's life becomes, what does Jesus want? Not what pleases me, not what makes me happy, quote unquote, not what I desire, not my preferences. I give up my right to have things the way I want, and I begin to live by this principle, what does Jesus want and what pleases him today? It doesn't mean I become perfect. That's gonna take a lifetime as I walk on that journey, but I have changed direction in a very fundamental way, that the underlying principle of my life is now what does Jesus Christ want, and no longer what is it that pleases Freddie and what makes him happy.

And so in that process, there is a change of mind, there's a change of heart, there's a change of behavior. I don't have time to get into all of that, but let me say these few things about repentance. Repentance is not only turning into a new direction with a new ruling principle of life, but repentance is also now seeing my sin in a new light.

I wanna say this, repentance involves something that involves a change of how I view the consequences of my actions. All of us have experienced remorse. All of us have thought about what sin does to us.

You may feel bad that you sin because your sin did something bad to you. All of us have regrets. When we look at the consequences of our sins and what they have done to us or what they have done to other people.

But in repentance, a person begins to see what their sin has done to God. Do you know that sin does something to the heart of God? Let me show that to you in Genesis chapter six, verse five. The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thought of his heart was only evil all the time.

The Lord was grieved that he had made men on the earth and his heart was filled with pain. His heart was filled with pain, why? Because the Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become and

that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil all the time. God's heart was filled with pain because of the thoughts in men's minds.

The thoughts in the hearts of people cause pain to God. Now that's still true today. There is pain in the heart of God.

There is pain in the heart of God. When God looks at our city and those who are pastor who talk to people, you hear the brokenness that sin has caused, what the damage of what people did to other people and what it has caused them. When you hear some of the stuff that goes on, you realize the heart of God is filled with pain.

So in repentance, you quit from seeing your sin has an annoying bad habit. You quit from seeing it as a lousy bad habit. You start seeing it as something that causes pain to the heart of God.

You see very often people say, well, I'm struggling with the sin. I'm struggling with this bad habit. I can't quit it.

And you know why that often is the case? It's because if you ask them, why do you wanna quit that bad habit? Well, it's annoying. You wanna quit doing drugs. Well, why do you wanna quit? Well, it's I can't keep a job.

It's annoying. I mean, look at my face. You know what it's doing to me? Well, that's not gonna last.

The deliverance that's based on that is not gonna last. At some point, you have to begin to see that, no, yeah, this did something to your body. It did something to your family, did something to your job.

But most importantly, it hurt the heart of God who created you. When a person begins to see that, a change is going to happen. When you begin to look at God and say, God, I hurt you.

I hurt you. You begin to see there, there's going to be a beginning of repentance. Repentance is accompanied by something that you don't hear about much these days.

It's called godly sorrow. Godly sorrow, the Bible talks about it in 2 Corinthians chapter seven, verse 10. Godly sorrow brings repentance and leads to salvation and leaves no regret.

But worldly sorrow brings death. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret. But worldly sorrow brings death.

Godly sorrow is different from remorse. It's different from regret. You see that among Jesus' apostles, they all denied him.

Judas was not the only one. Judas denied the Lord. Peter also denied Jesus.

They all betrayed him that night. But Judas, the Bible says, was full of remorse and he went and he hung himself. Peter also betrayed Jesus that night.

But it says Peter went and wept. That was really the difference between, Judas felt bad about what he'd done. How could I do something like this? It is self-focused.

It's how could a great person like me do something so terrible? And so it is self, it is focused on oneself. It leads to regret. It leads to beating oneself up and eventually Judas went and hung himself.

That's not what we're talking about. Everybody in the world, believer, unbelievers, sometimes feel regret and sorry about what they've done. But godly sorrow leads to repentance.

It leads to turning to God. It has to do with what my sin did to God. It has to do with me turning away from my way of living based on what pleases me to living based on what pleases the Lord.

That is godly sorrow. Repentance is accompanied by true confession. Back in Mark chapter one, it says, confessing their sins, they were baptized in the Jordan River.

People came from all over the place to see John in a desert region. And it is very interesting. Let's pause and think about that for a second.

Look, we're sitting here in a nice auditorium. I really love this. This is great.

But John didn't have this. He didn't. This is a guy in the desert.

The Bible says he wore camel's hair. Now, I don't know what that looks like. But it was not, he wasn't trendy.

Let's put it that way, okay? He was not looking cool. He did not have a lot of good things going around. There was nothing, a man in the desert.

But people came to him there. People left the cities and went out there to John because they wanted to make their hearts right. They were not being entertained.

John was not offering them any entertainment. He was telling them to repent. And those who were serious enough about their relationship with God, they went there.

Sometimes I hear people say, well, I went to this church and I didn't like it. And I was like, okay, why didn't you like? Well, I don't like the music. I don't like this.

I don't like that. It sounds like they're shopping for a house or something. And I'm like, wait, what is this about? When they're singing, is it for you or is it for the Lord? How come, does the singing have to please you? Thought it was for the Lord.

And you see here that these folks who went to John, they weren't trying to say, okay, I want John to speak the way I like. I want John to play the songs that I like. No, they came because they wanted to get their lives right with God.

That's the only reason to come to church. It is because you desire to get closer to God. It is because you desire to get closer to Jesus Christ and grow.

If that is no longer the goal, if the goal is just to come see people, come fellowship, make friends, you're missing it. Oftentimes, you hear in some of the Christian lingo, how people evaluate the service. We went to church today, that preacher was anointed.

He had the anointing of God in him. He had God upon him. And you say, well, how could you tell the anointing? How could you tell the anointing? Well, man, the Holy Ghost came and we were all like jumping and we were all, he was running around the pulpit.

He was doing all these things. I don't do that. I can't.

But he said, it was anointed. It was anointed and what they're saying is that this person who exudes this charisma, that's the anointing of God. Do you know how you evaluate the anointing on a preacher's life? Let me tell you, remember this.

Remember this. This is the way that you know whether or not a man, anybody ministering, whether or not the anointing of God is upon their lives. What happens to people after they've listened to him? Know how people felt while he was talking.

It is what happens to them after they go home. If I hear somebody says, man, I listened to that preacher. I went home and I confessed to my children.

I repented to them. That was an anointed man of God. That was an anointed.

People say, yeah, I went home and I threw away all the dirty entertainment that I'm addicted to. You say, okay, that was anointed. You know it by ask people come and sit under this person's teaching day, week after week after week.

What's happening to their lives? When you see a change where people's lives are being transformed, that's an anointed minister. How do we know that John the Baptist was anointed by the Holy Spirit? The people who came to him repented. That's the only sign.

Do you know the Bible said John did no miracles? The Bible says that. John did no miracles. He never healed one person, never cast out one demon.

He did not. The anointing of John the Baptist was that prostitutes, tax collectors, Roman soldiers and others came there, repented, confessed their sins, turned to God and were prepared for the coming of Jesus Christ. That's an anointed man.

That's an anointed man. That's the kind of minister I wanna be. And I know here in this church you have one like that.

I know that those who come here and listen to the word of God week after week, if you're paying attention with an open heart, I know your lives will change. And I know people whose lives have been changed for coming here. And I thank God for that.

I really do. Nothing gives me greater joy than to see a church where people come, are hearing the word of God, are going home, their lives are transformed, they're falling in love with Jesus Christ, getting closer to him. That tells me that there is someone there who genuinely loves the Lord and walks with him.

And so let me take this further here. And let me give you just one example from scripture of what repentance looks like. In Luke chapter 19, the Bible tells us of a man, a tax collector by the name of Zacchaeus.

Jesus is going to a town called Jericho. And in Jericho, there's a man named Zacchaeus. He's a tax collector.

And tax collectors in those days, what happened was that in the Roman Empire, the Romans didn't pay taxes, but all the other people who are non-Roman citizens, they pay taxes. So in this time, the land of Israel, Judea, and all that are under Roman occupation. And so they're supposed to pay taxes.

So what would happen is that some people who are Jews were working for the Romans. They will go around with the Roman soldiers. They come to your business and they'll say, you owe \$500 in taxes.

Now, usually what that meant is that you really owe 300, but they would charge you 500 and he will pocket some of that money and then send to Rome what you really owe them. That was a practice, it was corruption, 101, okay? So because of that, tax collectors were viewed as terrible people, not only because they were Jewish people working for the Roman occupiers, they were viewed as traitors, but on top of that, they were considered thieves, dishonest people, okay? And so that was Zacchaeus. And so Jesus is coming to Jericho and there's this man, Zacchaeus.

The Bible says he wanted to see Jesus. He was interested in Jesus himself. And so he runs and he climbs on a tree just to take a peek at Jesus because he was too short.

He couldn't see Jesus in the crowd. He climbs on a tree. And then Jesus sees him under a tree and says, hey, Zacchaeus, I'm gonna come and stay at your house.

So Zacchaeus throws out a dinner for him. He was a wealthy man. And look, 19 verse seven, all the people saw this and they began to mutter, he has gone to be the guest of a sinner.

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, Lord, look, here and now, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount. Jesus said to him today, salvation has come to this house because this man too is a son of Abraham.

For the son of man came to seek and to save what was lost. Let's think about this for a moment here. Here's a picture of repentance.

Jesus came into the house of Zacchaeus. This is a man who was willing to have Jesus come into his house. But if you notice one thing, that was not enough.

He was not enough that he wanted to see Jesus, that he had spiritual curiosity. It was not enough that he was interested in spiritual things. That's the picture of a person who comes to church.

They're friendly with Jesus. They're okay hanging out with Jesus. They're okay inviting Jesus into their home.

But that's not enough. Zacchaeus didn't invite Jesus and have dinner with him and send Jesus on his way and then forever put a picture of him and Jesus on his table so you know Jesus was here. Years after, that's not what he did.

He took it a step further. He knew how he had lived. He knew what problems were in his life.

He knew what his sins were. And so he addressed it head on. He said, Lord, look, here and now, I give half of my possession to the poor and if I cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay them back four times the amount.

So here's what repentance looked like. Repentance is more than just going to church. Repentance is more than just being friendly to Jesus.

Repentance is more than just intellectually accepting the Christian creed. It is more than that. Repentance is when a person, here and now, without delay, repentance is when a person say, now, today, right now, I

am going to make things right.

It's when a person gets to that point in their lives where they're no longer willing to play games with God. They're no longer willing to just play church. And they say, today, I'm going to start making some real decisions that show that I'm serious about following Jesus Christ.

Here and now. And then there's the radical nature of the repentance. It says, for Zacchaeus, his idol, his sin was money.

It was love of money. And so here's what Zacchaeus did. Now, I know it's Sunday morning.

It's early, but let's do some math, okay? Let's do some math. So, Zacchaeus, let's say, Zacchaeus says, half of my money, I give to the poor. Let's say Zacchaeus had, let's say Zacchaeus had \$100,000, okay? Half of my money, I give to the poor.

So how much is he left with? 50,000. So let's say he had only stolen 10% of his money, okay? Only 10% was acquired dishonestly. 90% of his money was acquired honestly, okay? So he said, to anybody I cheated, I'll give four times as much.

So let's say, so he had 10,000, he had given, it was what he acquired dishonestly. He say he gives four times as much. That's how, how much does he give away? 40,000.

So half he gave away, 50,000, 40,000 for restitution. So now how much is he left with? 10,000. That's what an encounter with Jesus did to this man.

He went from 100% to 10% of his wealth. Now, if you further calculate this, you'll find that the maximum Zacchaeus must have stolen in his life was 12.5%. So he wasn't as big of a crook as people thought he was, okay? When you say he went and he stayed at the house of a sinner, Zacchaeus, he was actually not that bad. The most he must have stolen was 12.5%. The rest of his money acquired it honestly.

But you see the radical nature of his repentance. He doesn't say to Jesus, Jesus, I know they all giving me a bad rap, but I'm actually not that bad. Let me tell you, it was only 12.5%, okay? He doesn't say that.

He does not defend himself. He does not make any excuses. There's a radical throwing away of the idol that ruled over his life, a radical dealing with it.

That's repentance. When Jesus enters the life of a person, you see radical decisions, radical turning away from the idols of their lives. What does that mean? What does that mean for us today? It means this.

You have friends who lead you to sin. You know when you get together with them, you're gonna end up smoking weed or you're gonna end up in fornication or you're gonna end up watching something immoral. You cut it off.

You make radical decision, you cut it off. You say, Jesus, here and now I give up this relationship because they're badly influencing me. They're influencing me more than I'm influencing them.

It means saying, you know what, Lord, I can't be on the internet by myself. I end up watching unclean things. So you make a radical decision.

You install whatever software there is that blocks that stuff up. You make some radical decisions. It means that you begin to make steps in your life that shows that you are serious about turning away from the things that brought pain to the heart of God in your life.

That's what Zacchaeus did here. Not only that, there is a candid dealing with the consequences of what he had done. He knew he had stolen money from some people.

So he went back and he did not say, well, you know, Jesus has forgiven me. It's all under the blood and now I don't need to do anything. That's what I hear a lot of people say.

No, Zacchaeus knew that if I defrauded anybody, it's not enough for me to say, God, forgive me. I gotta go give it back. You see, if I stole this thing here and let's say I stole this from Daniel, okay, and I have it in my house and now I repent, I give my heart to God and I say, now I'm a believer and God has forgiven me and I can't be there sitting on this thing here and saying, well, thank God for grace.

Thank God for salvation. Thank God that I don't, it doesn't work like that, okay? I have to go get this thing and say, call Daniel and say, hey, you know what? I had stolen your thing. Here it is.

Sometime I've heard people quote this 2 Corinthians 5. You know, if any man is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old has passed away. All things have become new.

And they quote that to say that they are now free from all the responsibilities of making things right. That doesn't work like that. You know, it doesn't work like that.

You know, if you owed money to a bank, and then you become a Christian, you don't go to the bank and quote 2 Corinthians 5, and say, all things have passed away. The old is gone, they're my debt. I'm no more monthly payment to you guys.

I'm done with that. It does not work like, if you become a believer, you will become more responsible about paying that loan back. If you missed payments before, now you're not gonna miss them, okay? The new life makes you better at fulfilling your earthly responsibilities.

And so there is this thing called restitution. Repentance goes along with restitution. That's something that is not spoken often.

You know, somebody came to us, and he said that I've stolen things from stores. It was really odd, because he remembered everything he had stolen here in the Boston area. He said, I went to this store, I stole a Coke.

It costs, you remember how much they all cost? It cost this much. And I went to this other store, I got this, and I went to this store, and I got that, and I got that. And he said, what do I do now? I said, you gotta go back.

Tell those people I stole your things, and here is the money back. Now, this is real Christianity. This is where it goes from a creed to something real.

This is how you show that you are honest and serious about following the law. I told the gentleman, you have to go back and tell the people, and he's stolen money from a certain place, a job, and I said, you gotta go back. Tell them, this is what I did.

Some people need to go back and confess and apologize to their children. Some of you need to go back and tell your children, I was bad to you. I was mean.

I was not the kind of father, kind of mother I needed to be, and I am sorry. Some husbands need to go to your wife and say, I was bad to you. I was unfaithful.

I did not, I wasn't the man I ought to have been. Forgive me. Some wives need to go to their husband and say, I've been nasty to you.

I'm sorry about that. Some children, you need to call your parents and tell them, I gave you guys a headache, and I was not good. You don't become a Christian and just say, well, that's all under the blood.

Well, it is, but you gotta go and say you're sorry. You gotta go and repent. Say to your parents, I am sorry.

I gave you guys hell. I repent about that. Maybe some of you need to go to your pastor and say, I've been a headache of a church member, and I have only, you're the person that, I'm the person that makes you stay late at night and pray.

I'm sorry about that. I repent. There are some church members like that that would give pastors headaches, and at some point in your life, you gotta go there and say, you know what? I'm sorry, and I thank you that you love me enough that you just didn't sit down with me and tell me, you know what? Why don't you go find another church? I thank you that you love me enough for that.

That is repentance, where you make things right with the people who have been hurt by your sins, where all of us have had, there are some people who never apologize for anything. I don't get that. The only person who never sins is God.

He's the only one who doesn't apologize. You and I do stuff that we need to apologize to people about. When was the last time you apologized to somebody? The godliest people that I know, they apologize.

They apologize to their children. They apologize to their spouse. They tell their children.

One man was telling me, when I go to the store, I see a beautiful woman and I end up lasting after her. I go home and I tell my wife, wow, that's a godly man. He doesn't make me look less at him.

It makes me respect him more. It makes me respect him more. Now, if you did that, you'd probably be free from lust very quick.

It is restitution. It is making sure that we're not skipping over. It is preparing the way for the coming of the Lord.

Now, listen to what Jesus said to Zacchaeus. Today, salvation has come to this house because this man was a son of Abraham. Today, salvation.

Jesus proclaimed salvation for Zacchaeus only after he had repented. You get that? Not while inviting Jesus. Jesus didn't say this when he came into his house at the beginning of the dinner.

He waited until he saw repentance in Zacchaeus. Then Jesus say, now salvation has come to this man. You could see the result, the fruit of repentance.

So that is the last thing that I wanna say here is that repentance does have fruit. People can see it in your life. And John the Baptist says that to a crowd of people who came to him.

Verse seven, John chapter three, verse seven. John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, you brood of vipers who warn you to flee from the wrath to come. Produce fruit in keeping with repentance and do not begin to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father.

For I tell you out of these stones, God can raise up children for Abraham. John was telling them, don't find comfort in your spiritual pedigree. Don't comfort yourself by saying, you know, I was raised in a Pentecostal church or I used to hang out, I'm assemblies of God.

Or I am this, I used to hang out with such and such men of God. You know, I knew so and so. I was friends with Billy Graham or I was friend with Brother Zach.

That's agreement of God that I knew. I, you know, I used to be friends with Pastor Gus. You know, you don't, you don't, I used to go to Freddy's church.

That's not gonna help. It's not gonna help anybody. John says, do not comfort yourself by saying, well, you were children of Abraham.

You're right, you're children of Abraham, but that's not enough. There gotta be fruit of repentance. Produce fruit.

Repentance has fruit. People around you ought to see it. That you're coming to Christ, it's changing something in you.

I wanna begin to wrap up now. Oh, I have five minutes left. Okay, let me do this.

You know, I said that the first coming of Jesus was preceded by preparing the way to repentance. And, and I said that the greatest event that ever happened in the world was the coming of the Son of God into this world. But you know what the greatest event that the world is waiting for? What's gonna happen? It's not the next U.S. election.

The greatest event that the world is waiting for is the second coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus is coming again. Well, I hope you'll be more than happy and more excited about that.

Jesus is coming again. He is coming again. And you ought to be excited about that.

I hope you are. If you are not excited about the fact that Jesus is coming back, well, you need to check your spiritual pulse. You need to check yourself, make sure you have, you're spiritually alive.

Because the Bible, Paul says, the crown of life is now in store for me. The Lord, the righteous just will give it, not just to me, but to all who long for his appearing. The song that the church sings in Revelation is the Spirit says come and the bride says come as well.

So longing of the church is for Jesus Christ to come by all of us who desire that. And may that even be tonight. May that be tomorrow.

Praise the Lord if he comes soon. Let him come soon. Okay, let him come soon.

And I was talking, I had spent a couple of days this week with some of the Calvary elders. Great, great group of godly men. It was a great blessing to be with them on a retreat.

And we're talking about this being ready for the coming of the Lord. Now, how do we get ready? Christians spend their time arguing about the signs and what's gonna happen at this particular time. You know, who's the red horse and the pale horse and the black horse and all that? Why is there half an hour of silence in the heavens? And what's the seven trumpets? What are the seven bowls? And when is what? Is it pre-trib? Is it in-trib? Is it post-trib? Is it a-millennial, post-millennial, pre-millennial? And who knows? Who knows? What's gonna happen is gonna happen regardless of what opinions you and I hold.

We have no control over how the events will unfold. But you know what we have control over? Whether we're gonna be ready. You have complete control over whether you are going to be ready for it.

Now, how do we prepare? How do we make sure we prepare the way for the second coming of Jesus? You know how? By repentance. By living in repentance. You say, well, isn't repentance just for unbelievers? Well, no, because the last message that Jesus gave to the church, you know what that message was? It was not go and make disciples of all nations.

It is in Revelations. Jesus, in writing seven letters to seven churches, five out of the seven, you know what he tells them? Repent. Read it there.

The church in Ephesus, I believe the church in Pergamum, the church in Thyatira, and Laodicea. He tells them, oh, repent. That is the message that the Lord is giving today.

Daniel, if you and the team could come up. You know, and I wanna say this to you. If this sounds hard, let me leave you with this.

Repentance is, there are fruit, there's a blessing for the repentant. And I wanna just say that to you. Here's what happens when somebody does repent.

The Bible said that Jesus also went to be baptized by John, not because he had any sin, but because he wanted to show us an example. And here is what the Bible says. When Jesus was baptized, he prayed the heaven was open.

When a person repents, you get an open heaven. Prayers are answered. No more hindrance between you and the Lord.

Verse 22 of Luke chapter three, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form. The anointing of God comes into your life. When you walk in repentance, the anointing of God comes into your life.

Third, the voice came from heaven. You are my son whom I love. With you I'm well pleased.

The comforting voice of God, the reassuring voice of God comes to the heart of the repentant. The reassuring voice. Have you heard that voice? You heard that voice recently? So I'm calling you.

I believe that there is a revival coming. We are praying for the Lord to send a revival to our city. But we have to prepare the way by genuine and sincere repentance.

We have to prepare the way by genuine and sincere repentance. As we seek the Lord for revival, let's seek him for in an attitude and in a spirit of repentance. Amen.

So I do wanna pray as we close here. I just wanna pray for anyone here who's sick. Whether you're physically sick or you're just, you're suffering from depression or something like that.

I just wanna pray for you before we close. I know we're a little past our time. And let me just tell you this thing really quick.

Just to encourage your faith. When I was in college, and I was one day, maybe one in the morning, there was a piano, grand piano downstairs in the library. And I was there playing, trying to learn to play.

And I was playing some hymns. A girl walks in and she tells me, why are you awake? And I said to her, well, I'm just playing songs to God here on the piano. And I asked her, why are you awake? She said, because I have trouble sleeping.

I barely sleep only a couple of hours a night. And those couple of hours are filled with terrible dream. I dream that my grandmother is dying and all of that.

And I can't, and I told her, I'm gonna pray for you. My God's gonna help you sleep. I laid one hand and I prayed for her.

And I ran into her the next day. She said, you won't believe this. I slept for four hours straight.

I told her that's not enough. And an advice I have not taken myself. I tell her that's not enough.

Let's pray some more. And we prayed. And she slept fine from that time on.

And she ended up going to grad school, doing well. And it was not even a believer at that time. Jesus heals out of his love and his compassion.

Only for out of his love and his compassion. So I want us to pray. If you are sick, why don't you come forward for those who want to.

You can just step out in the aisle or something. And I'm just gonna pray for your father. Father, you are God who loves to heal people.

Father, we pray. We ask you, Lord, just show compassion, Lord, and love, Father, to anyone here who's dealing with something, whether chronic or just something that has happened suddenly. Father, we pray for your healing touch on their bodies.

Lord, pray for anyone, Lord, who just suffers from depression, is unable to sleep, is struggling. Lord, just having joy. Father, I pray that you would help them, Lord.

I say it in Jesus' name, amen.

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