

# Repentance

by James Robison

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*Repentance is the essential step towards individual salvation and national survival, involving a genuine turning away from sin and towards God.*

**Duration:** 58:52

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 6:9

**Topics:** "Repentance", "Salvation"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the transformative power of repentance and turning to Jesus Christ for salvation. It shares personal testimonies of individuals who turned away from destructive lifestyles, found redemption, and experienced the life-changing love of God through repentance. The message highlights the importance of genuine repentance, faith in Jesus, and the need for individuals and nations to turn to God for salvation and restoration.

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## Transcript

In my profession, there's no greater thrill than to be in a Super Bowl game, and I guess there's no greater disappointment than to lose one. But I believe if your life is built on the right foundation, then every stepping stone is victory. You're going to watch one of the most important programs that you've ever watched.

All of my life, for many, many years, my life evolved around self, pleasing myself. I was an alcoholic. I lived for pleasures of the world, to seek fulfillment from all the things this world had to offer.

I lived fast, played golf every day, gambled, drank, stayed up late at night, some nights all night. My home was torn apart. My children were disappointed in their daddy.

I could see this. When I decided I didn't want to raise children in the kind of atmosphere that we were living in, so we did decide the best thing to do would be to get a divorce. After we were divorced, Gary did get into drugs, and I found myself doing the same things I hated you for, still partying.

I was hard to look at. I was ashamed to get out in public. I had scars all over my face, and I had no hair.

I had nubs for years, and my hands were crippled and scarred and maimed, and I had no reason to live, I thought. I had graduated from college in 1973, and like millions of young Americans, I was down on America. Vietnam was still not over.

President Nixon, the first president in American history to be taken out of the White House. Young Americans were really upset. Many Americans were upset about what the country seemed to have become.

Instead of going out, I had just been accepted to graduate school. Instead of going out and getting a job, I decided that I wanted to see what America was really like. Is there hope for America? Some of you, it may seem an exaggeration for a preacher to stand and say America is running out of time, but my friend, we are.

I can assure you that just as other nations have met with ultimate total destruction, America will also be destroyed, unless, and this is the hope, unless America repents. Rome could have been spared, but only had she repented. Repentance is the word of hope for America.

Repentance is essential for our existence. Repentance is essential for not only the salvation of our nation, but it is essential for the salvation of any individual. As I've considered the truth of repentance and the need for repentance, I've asked God in prayer for many weeks and months to lead me to a knowledge and an understanding of repentance.

America must repent or she'll perish. In Luke chapter 13, Jesus preached, except ye repent, you shall all likewise perish. And he referred to two current events and to scores of people who had been put to death and who had perished suddenly and Jesus said, unless you repent, you'll also perish.

And he's not simply speaking of physical destruction. He's talking about spiritual destruction. Jesus says repentance is essential.

Repentance is the message of the hour. It was the message of the Old Testament. It was the message of the New Testament.

It was the message that Joseph preached with his wife to Potiphar's wife. It was the message that he preached to all of Israel and to his own family with his wife. Repent, repent.

It was the message that Moses delivered to Pharaoh. Repentance was the message of Elijah to Ahab and to Jezebel. And it was the message of Elijah on Mount Carmel when he told him how long, how long between two opinions, choose you this day whom you will serve.

That was what he was saying. Repent, Joshua said it, repent. It was the message of Ezekiel and the message of Daniel.

It was the message of Jeremiah with a broken heart. And it was the message of John the Baptist, repent. He preached it to the religious leaders who came to receive his baptism.

And he told them, go back and bring forth fruit that proves you've repented. Jesus came forth preaching the message of repentance. God had one son.

He sent him as a savior, but he also sent him as a preacher to preach the message of repentance. Repentance is the message of this hour. It was the message of Peter at Pentecost.

Repent. It was the message of Paul on Mars Hill. It was the message of Paul on storm-tossed seas and in every synagogue.

And from house to house he preached repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And the message of this hour is repentance. It's not heard in America and it is not heeded in America.

There are few people who repent. What is repentance? First of all, I want us to consider the definition of repentance. If you're to know salvation, if our society is to be saved, if your future is to be secured, repentance is required for the redemption of a society or a soul.

Repentance is required for redemption and repentance is the result of redemption. Have you ever repented? Have you ever turned to God and received the redemptive work of God in your life that so transforms you and changes you that repentance is the expression of God's work in your life? It's the result of God's work in your life. Have you ever repented? Just a couple of months ago in Florence, Oregon, I finished a walk across the entire United States.

It covered 4,751 miles, went through 20 states, and it took five and a quarter years. Now, I know you're asking yourself, why would anybody walk across the United States? This is a huge country. The reason I did was because I had graduated from college in 1973 and like millions of young Americans, I was down on America, and so I decided to walk.

I didn't plan on taking five years. I thought I could do it in eight months. I had my dog Cooper, an Alaskan Malamute by my side.

So we started out, and we not only were going to walk across America, but we wanted to live with the people, and we walked through the Appalachian Mountains and lived with a mountain man named Homer Davenport. We walked further and lived with a black family for five months and worked in a sawmill in the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. I lived on a commune in central Tennessee.

I walked through the entire state of Alabama and lived with redneck ranchers. I got to meet Governor Wallace. I saw high school football games with 40,000 people playing, and then I walked into Mobile, Alabama, which is in the southern tip of Alabama, and I had been working all this time in association with National Geographic magazine.

I was doing an article about what I was finding in America. I always had my cameras around my neck, and I saw these billboards one afternoon advertising a revival. I had no idea what a revival was.

I was from Connecticut. We don't have revivals in Connecticut that I know of, and I said, wow, this would be fun to go to a revival and make some neat pictures of the preacher jumping up and down. I didn't know what to expect.

I figured there would be sawdust on the ground and a striped tent and a few hundred country people there. So I walked in, and there was 10,000 people in the auditorium, so I couldn't sit in the back because I only had a 200mm lens on my Nikon camera, so I had to sit right in front of the evangelist, and the evangelist's name was James Robison. He began to preach about sinners repenting and about being born again, and this was in 1975.

What he said started really getting to me. So as he came to the end of his message and called sinners to come forward, I realized that I was a sinner, Mr. Hip, Mr. Intellectual, Mr. Working for a Magazine. I realized that I needed to come to Jesus, and that's what I did, and he's guided me.

He guided me across the entire country. He guided me through the swamps of Louisiana, where we live with alligator hunters, through Texas, through New Mexico, through the Rockies of Colorado, where we live with some gold miners, through the state of Utah, through Idaho, and finally to Oregon. And not only did I find America, the great country that I was looking for, but I found Jesus, and that was the most important thing I could have ever found.

That you sorrowed to repentance, for you were made sorry after a godly manner that you might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. What is repentance? Paul said, I'm grateful that you have repented after a godly fashion.

You repented unto salvation. The sorrow of the world worketh death. What is repentance? I'm glad you repented, Paul said.

I'm glad that you've repented in a godly fashion. What is repentance? First of all, let me state very clearly what it is not. Repentance is not remorse.

It is not simply being sorry for your sins. It is not simply saying, I'm sorry. For you see, the expression of the average person who says, I'm sorry, is simply an expression of the fact that they're sorry.

The consequences of their sin finally overtook them and they're sorry I got caught. That's the testimony of the average person who says, I'm sorry. Now this is the sorrow of the world and Paul said, the sorrow of the world worketh death.

It's not enough for you to say, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

The prodigal son said, I'm sorry. But he could have stood in the pig pen and cried aloud, I'm sorry I'm in trouble. I'm sorry I left home.

I'm sorry I lost my wealth. I'm sorry that sin has ruined me. I'm sorry.

I'm sorry. Until he died in the pig pen. Sorry.

It's not enough for you to say to God, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Oh, I'm sorry.

It's not enough. That is not repentance. For what are you sorry? You're in trouble.

It's not repentance. Our attention as human beings is focused on self. I'm in trouble.

Self. I'm in trouble. That's not repentance.

That's remorse. Second, repentance is not regret. Regret is not repentance.

Regret is not repentance. Saying, I wish I hadn't done it, that's regret. Have you ever said, I wish I could live my life over? You can't.

You can't live it over. And regret is not repentance. You can spend your life saying, I wish I could do it over.

I wish I could live my life over. I wish I had another chance. I wish I could start over.

You can't live it over. But you can get a new life. You can have a spiritual new birth, new beginning.

But you can't live it over. And you can say, I'm sorry that that happened and I wish it hadn't. That's what Judas did.

The scripture tells us concerning Judas that he was sorry. In the Word of God, we find these words. In Matthew 27, verses 3 through 5, Judas, who betrayed Jesus, when he saw that he was condemned, he repented himself and he brought again the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and to the elders and he said, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.

I'm sorry. I wish I hadn't done it. That's not repentance.

And the Bible says he went out and hung himself. And you can know that a man who lives in rebellion against God never repented. He killed himself.

He was sorry he did it. He regretted that he did it. But that's not repentance.

That's not repentance. Reform is not repentance. Some of you have said, I'm going to start over and live right.

I'm going to live right. That's not repentance. You stop today and say, now I'm going to live right.

I'm going to do everything right. I'll go to church and I'll be good and I'll give money and I'll treat people right. That's not repentance.

That's reform. That's not repentance. Reform is works.

And the Bible says, for by grace are you saved. See, not of works, lest any man should boast. You're not going to be saved by your works.

By grace. And if you reform and say, now I'm going to do all the right things, it's not salvation. Last, repentance is not religion.

It is not religion. Now religion has become the chief substitute in our world for repentance. Religion is becoming increasingly popular.

There are religions all over the world. Let me ask you this. If religion is the answer, if religion could change your life, if religion could meet the need in every heart, why the cross? Why Jesus? Why the Savior? Religion is a curse.

Religion keeps people from God. Religion stands between people and God. You say, that doesn't make sense.

Satan is subtle. And he's going to tell you what you need is religion. You need to meditate.

You need to study the different religions of the world. All it'll do is confuse you. If you want to get as confused as a termite in a yo-yo, you study religions.

Religion's not the answer. It really isn't. It never has been.

They had religion when Jesus came. As a matter of fact, the greatest problem Jesus ever met was the problem of religion. Our churches are filled with people who have never repented.

All over America. They come, but they've never repented. A black pastor said, when asked the question, explain the visible and the invisible church doctrine.

He said, that's simple. Sunday morning, the visible church. Sunday night, the invisible church.

Sunday morning, our buildings are filled with empty people. They've never repented. They're here, but they've never repented.

Christians are always fighting among themselves. What's wrong? Many of them are not Christians. They've never repented.

They became religious. I became religious. Nothing happened.

I knew God wasn't in my life. I knew I was empty. And so many people are exposed to religion.

Three days before Elvis Presley died, God awakened me in the night and I wrote him a letter. He didn't get it. He died in the bathroom of his mansion reading a book on discovering the skeletal remains of Jesus.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Mr. Presley knows now you'll never find the skeletal remains of Jesus.

He's a liar. Elvis Presley had been exposed to religion all of his life. All of his life.

Somehow I can't help but feel, and God knows how I loved him, I wanted the Lord Jesus to so fill his life and take that dynamic ability to communicate and use it for God's glory. I wanted that. Somehow I can't help but wonder if perhaps some of the people he met in his childhood, some of his relatives who had been exposed to religion had never repented and therefore Elvis was always confused and he was always searching, searching, searching, searching.

He told a friend of mine, I sit at the mansion and I stare at these walls. I'm so bored with Cadillacs in the garage and motorcycles and luxury. I stare at the walls.

I'm so bored. Life was empty, but he had been touched by religion and somehow he kept searching and searching, but I wonder had he ever met anyone who had repented. I don't believe he would have ever forgotten it if he could only have met someone in whose life Jesus was more than a religious idea.

A living Savior, a Lord of Lords and King of Kings. I was so repulsed by religion when I was a boy that I detested it. I had tried it and I knew it didn't work.

I had been christened. I had been through the motions and I knew it didn't work. I had once taken the Bible in my hand and I clinched it and I threw it out the window and I said, it's not so.

How could the Bible be so? And my life so messed up. My family and my home so messed up. I've met many people who were religious, but had never repented.

What is repentance? All through the Bible you find the command to repent. God preached it to His nation Israel. He warned them they had to repent.

We have to repent. I talked to a young man the other night. He told me of all the sins in his life.

My first impulse was to tell him, what you need to do is quit this and quit this and quit this. And so finally I said, well you need to stop that. And you know what he said? He said, I can't.

I'm hooked. I can't stop. How do you stop? You know what I was doing? Unbeknown to me, I was giving that young man bad advice.

I was saying, you need to stop. You need to stop. Now you know what he needed to do? He needed to turn.

And he needed to turn his eyes upon Jesus. Now folks, I'm going to give you the definition of repentance according to Scripture. Repentance is turning to Jesus Christ.

You know, our home hadn't always been exactly like it is now. Really, my whole life revolved around drinking, I guess, from the time I was about 14 until a few years ago. And when we were first married, when I was about 21, Sandy's life was very much in the same shape, and we had a good time for a while, I guess, partying.

At least it seemed like a good time to the people around us. But when we came home at night, it wasn't always that good, was it, Sandy? No, I remember when we were first married, what was most important to me was being in the social whirlwind. And what I cared about was partying and having a good time.

But like Gary said, we'd come home at night, and it wasn't fun anymore. I'm not going to say we had a fight every time we were at a party, but three-fourths of them we did, and we'd come home, and I can remember how you'd be. You always turned against me and disliked me and hated me and would tell me that I was really a drag to you.

And I guess, in a way, I felt the same way about you, not that you were a drag, but I was just sick of being pushed around in the way you were treating me. Do you remember? I remember very well. I can remember the times that I stayed out, and I did feel like, I guess, in a way that you were standing between me and happiness or something that I was looking for.

And all the time that I was searching through all that, even into some drugs and marijuana and things, trying to find some kind of meaning in life. And we even searched for a time in religion, I guess. We started going to church on Sundays and thought maybe that would be the answer if we would quit doing some things and going to church.

But it just continued to grow worse until finally we divorced. Yeah, because this is what happened. I decided I didn't want to raise children in the kind of atmosphere that we were living in.

So we did decide the best thing to do would be to get a divorce. After we were divorced, Gary did get into drugs, and I found myself doing the same things I hated you for, still partying. But I remember when we remarried, the one stipulation was that we'd start going to church, and we thought that was the answer, that church was it.

And we were happy for a while, but it didn't last. For about two months, I think, before we slipped back into the same old thing. We went to a party, and it all started over again.

It went that way for about four years until one night we went to a crusade. We'd been invited by someone else. And at that crusade, I realized that night that the great need I had in my life was not simply to turn

away from these things.

I'd done that so many times before, trying to turn over new leaves. But that night I truly repented of the things in my life and turned to God, and that night I met Jesus Christ personally. And he became a very real person to me.

He became my Savior that night, and things changed very quickly around our house. Yeah, and I couldn't understand what had happened because we had been in church, and I thought I was a Christian. But I remember you were so different.

You started really loving us, and you started caring about us, and you wanted to quit doing things, whereas I was just playing a game. I was quitting habits I had, but not because I wanted to. I still wanted to do the things I was doing.

And finally, I remember one day in church, I walked the aisle, and Gary thought I was just rededicating my life. Can you remember that? But that's when I accepted Jesus as my personal Savior. Focus your attention, your allegiance, your life upon him.

And when you turn your eyes upon Jesus, you have turned your back on everything destructive and despicable and deceiving and deluded and depressing. You've turned your back on everything God despises when you turn your eyes on Jesus. Look to him.

Trust him. Recognize the futility of your present state, the emptiness of your life, the state of your soul, that you have indeed sinned, but in your own strength. No, you can't stop.

You're a bond slave of Satan, of sin. And you try to stop, and some of you have. I tried.

God knows when I was a boy, I tried to quit. I tried to stop. But you see, I was a child of Satan.

Satan's power was in my life. I couldn't stop. I was a bond slave to Satan.

And I tried to start over and I tried to do it right, but I couldn't. Because what? I was lost. And finally the Holy Spirit of God took the Holy Word of God and applied it to my heart.

And I realized that Jesus Christ had died for me personally, that he gave his life for me. And I knew I was a sinner and I needed to repent. And that night I admitted it.

I am a sinner. That's the truth. I can't stop.

I'm in bondage. I'm defeated. And Satan was destroying me.

And that night I turned my eyes upon Jesus and I said, Lord, you're the only one I can trust. You're the only hope I've got. And when I turned to him, I turned my back on everything that God said leave behind.

I couldn't leave it behind. I turned to God and God placed within my heart the power that controls the universe, the sovereign power of God. God delivered me.

And greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world. God gave me the ability to overcome. Don't let anyone come and tell me I'm a homosexual, but I'm a Christian and I can't overcome.

And don't let anyone come and tell me I'm a drunkard, but I'm a Christian and I can't overcome. And don't let any of you come to me as Christians who say you're Christians. And I use that word rather loosely when I refer to you as those who say you're Christians.

Don't you come to me and say, I can't love that fellow that hurt me. I can't love that person in my church. I can't love a black man.

I'm so sick and tired of hearing so-called conservative Christians who say I don't like black people and they express prejudice. Friend, if you're saved, you can't do anything other than love people regardless of their color. You say I'm a Christian and you don't love, then you're deceived.

When you repent, when you turn your eyes upon Jesus, God gives you the power to overcome. He's the overcomer. In 1962, I had a rather unique experience to take place in my life.

I was a young college boy that wanted to be a professional baseball player. More than anything else in the world, I wanted to play with the big leagues. But God had other plans for my life.

One night while I was driving back from a baseball game, a young lady and I were driving from the Houston area. We thought we were driving into fog, but rather we found out later it was gasoline fumes that somehow had escaped from one of the local refineries. There was a tremendous explosion.

The girl who was with me was burned to death. She died on her 21st birthday. Another man was pronounced dead through all of this.

My family was told that I would not live for the next four days. But God miraculously intervened in my life, and he brought me out of the coma that I'd been in for three days, but things were really not good. I was in the hospital the first time for 14 long, agonizing weeks.

Through 11 operations, I went through unbearable pain, and while I was going through the pain and the suffering, I eventually became an addict, a drug addict, addicted to medicine and narcotics, even in the hospital. I became very embittered with God. I thought God had been extremely unfair to me to take away my career, my dreams, my goal, my future, and I had nothing to live for except one more day of pain and agony and suffering.

Finally, on two operations, they thought they would do a grafting operation, putting new skin on areas where there was no skin. All of my face, all of my head was third and second degree burns, all of my back and arms and hands, and they thought they could put new skin there. But during these two operations, I suffered what was called cardiac arrest.

The first time, I was dead for seven minutes, and they had to do open-heart massage to revive me. The second time, I was dead for 15 minutes. Again, they had to do open-heart massage in order to bring me back to life.

Great complications took place, but finally, after a long, agonizing, hellish experience, I walked out of Pasadena General Hospital, but I walked back to a life of loneliness, emptiness, a life filled with bitterness and hate and self-centeredness and egotism, and I had no reason to live any longer, so I'd made a decision to take my life. But God, again, intervened drastically, tremendously, and gloriously. A young woman who had been coming to see me nearly every day, who eventually, later on, became my wife, came and prayed and encouraged and strengthened, and when I got out of the hospital, she knew how

lonely and desperate and how helpless and hopeless my life was to be, and she got me, miraculously, to go to a revival service where James Robinson was preaching.

I didn't want to go. I hated God so badly, but I went just to please her because I knew she had paid a tremendous price to minister to my soul and my life, and so we went. I resisted everything that was said until, finally, the invitation was extended, and James said he thought someone was there who had tried everything the world had to offer, and they were still a loser.

Everything about my life was a loser's life. Everything I'd ever done had loser written all over it, but that night, the Spirit of God moved upon my heart, and God said, I don't want you to be a loser. I want to make you a winner, and God told me that He had denied me good in order that He might give me the best, and that night, I opened my life to Jesus Christ.

I repented of my sins, and I was such a horrible, wicked, self-centered sinner, and I just turned from that old life, and I gave Him all that I was, and He gave to me all that He was. He exchanged my life for His life, and in that night of September of 1962, Jesus Christ made me a new creation. Old things passed away, and in Christ, all things became new.

Things can become new for you. Jesus Christ wants to change your life. I don't know if you need to go through what I went through, but I know that He can change anybody who will turn from their sins and receive His finished work at Calvary and accept Him as Lord and Savior.

Do it today. God bless you. Let me read you a powerful passage of Scripture.

It's so powerful. I hadn't intended to read it, but I want to read it to you because I want you to understand the power of repentance and salvation in Jesus Christ. I want you to see just how complete God's salvation is.

Listen to this. Now, listen closely. This is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, beginning at verse 9. Listen so closely.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Don't be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.

That's homosexuals. Now, that's what it is. And it's very clear.

Those that abuse themselves with men. But wait a minute. Don't take off on the gay society.

Don't take off after the homosexuals. The Scripture says, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revelers, nor extortioners. Now, that's talking about people that are full of hate and people that are hypocritical and dishonest.

The Bible's talking about these people shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But wait a minute. And such were some of you.

You were abusers of yourselves with mankind. Sexually impure. You were drunkards.

You were fornicators. You were liars. You were dishonest.

But now, you're washed, you're sanctified, you're justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Justified. Justified.

Must have been that same black preacher when they asked him to tell what it meant to be justified. You know what he said? He said, it means God looks at me just as if I'd never sinned. That's justified.

Justified. Just as if I'd never sinned. On December the 29th, 1971, I was in a bar, a place I spent much, much time, a lot of days and a lot of nights.

But I was in this place this night, and my wife and little girl and our two sons were home praying for their daddy at that very time. And I was in this place with some friends of mine, and I became so miserable, so uncomfortable. I didn't know exactly what was wrong with me at the time.

But I remember going around to each one of my friends that night, and I said, men, I've had a lot of fun with you and some good times, but there's something more to life than what I'm discovering, and I'm going to find it. There's more to life than trying to just make money and have fun always. So that night, I got up and I left that bar.

I called my parents who lived in a neighboring town. They came and got me. That night, in their home, in their kitchen, I got out on my knees for the very first time, and I repented of my sins.

I gave my life totally to the Lord Jesus Christ. I asked him to be Lord of everything. I said, Lord, I surrender.

I give you my life. And since that night, I've not been the same. He delivered me from my alcoholism.

He filled me with love for my wife and my kids like I've never known. I fell in love with him really for the first time. He's changed me completely.

Most people I face in churches have repented, have repented of the consequences of their sin, but they've never repented of their sin. I hope you get the point. To repent of the consequences of your sin is to try to get away from all the bad things that are caused by your sin, but to repent of your sin is to turn your eyes upon Jesus and give Jesus your life, and then he cleans those things out of your life.

You see, Jesus said, any man putting his hand to the plow and looking back is not fit for the kingdom of heaven. And he said to his disciples, Remember Lot's wife? Phyllis, Phyllis, remember Lot's wife? Do you remember? You say, who's she? Lot's wife. I just told you.

Lot's wife. What'd she do, Lord? Do you remember I burned Sodom and Gomorrah from the face of the earth? Do you remember that? Oh yes, Lord. We've read about that, how you burned Sodom and Gomorrah up.

You remember Lot's wife? She lived with a righteous husband, the most righteous man on earth at that time. She heard the Word all the time. She was surrounded with righteousness.

Do you remember when they left the city of Sodom and Gomorrah? Do you remember how wicked the city was? Do you remember that when I sent my angels to be with Lot? Do you remember that the homosexuals stood out in the street and cried out for that strange man, that guest, send him out in the street so that we can lay with him and make love with him, they cried out. Send him out. And you know what they said inside? Let us send out the girls.

And they said no. The men said no. You send out that man.

And God said, I send my fire and I destroy the city with a fervent heat. And he melted it and he did. But Lot and his wife and his family were leaving that wicked city.

God knows it was wicked. Man, it was wicked. And you know what she did? She turned around and looked back.

Imagine that. She looked back. She had a longing in her heart for Sodom.

You can't imagine how many people here in this place, how many people in America, they've got a longing. They've got a longing for impurity. They've got a longing for sex sin.

They've got a longing to satisfy the greed of the heart. They've got a longing for it. They're always looking back.

And you know why Jesus said, remember her? She was turned immediately when she turned to look back into a pile of salt. Just salt. She's gone.

You say, why does Jesus want us to remember that? Because Lot's wife is a picture of many of you who are surrounded by religion, but your heart longs for the world. No one way I know I'm a repentant, redeemed sinner, and I'm a sinner. But I've repented.

I'm redeemed. You know how I know I am? I wish I could not sin. I don't want to sin.

I don't want to sin. And someday my God will send his Son and take me where I cannot sin. Jesus is in my heart.

Do you understand that? Man, I've got rhythm. I've got excitement. I've got emotion.

But I won't please Jesus. Why? You say, because you're really neat. No, no, because he's really great, and he changed my life.

He really did. Folks, it's not what you do. It's not the things you have.

It's who has you, who you know personally. You see, repentance is turning to Jesus. Repentance is trusting Jesus.

Have you ever done that? I went to see a girl one time, because the people asked me to. They said, there's a girl, 15 years old, that wants to meet you. She watches you on television every week, and she has for three years.

Her name is Pam. And I said, well, I'm very busy. And that week we had the privilege of breaking all of Elvis Presley's attendance records in the Coliseum in Mobile.

Those records will never be broken, because we exceeded the fire marshal limit by nearly 3,000 and turned away thousands. And finally we moved out and went to a stadium with 25,000. And on Saturday that we were leaving the Coliseum, I went to see Pam.

You know why I went to see her? Because she had a brain tumor. They cut out of her head, and she was dying. When they cut the tumor out, it blinded her in one eye and paralyzed her on one side, and they

wanted me to go see her.

And I drove way out in the country. And when I walked up to the house, it was a modest place. I went up and knocked on the door, and I walked in, and Pam was in front of me in a chair, no hair on her head, totally bald.

They shaved it all off. She had a terrible scar. Chemotherapy had caused her hair to fall out and never grew back.

And when I walked in, the left eye was blind, and I was to her left. She couldn't see me. Her mother heard me and came walking in, and she said, Pam, Pam, Pam, look who's here, Pam.

And she came and pushed her head over, and Pam saw me. And when she did, she looked back over to Mama, and she said, Mama, look who came to see me, Mama. Look who came to see me, Mama, look.

And I went over, and Pam could move her right hand, and she grabbed my fingers, and boy, did she ever squeeze tight. And her mother stood there, and Pam's house shoes fell off her feet three times while I talked to her because her feet were so thin. She only weighed about 80 pounds.

Her mother showed me a whole row of trophies on the mantel. She said, You know Pam won those trophies swimming two years ago? She was a champion athlete. She had long brown hair all down her shoulders.

I wish you could have seen her. She was such a beautiful girl. Pam tightened her grip on my fingers.

She couldn't date. She couldn't play. She couldn't swim.

But I want to tell you this. In the next few minutes, I talked to a little girl that was more full of life than anybody I've ever met. She looked at me and said, Isn't God great? Isn't God good? Isn't God wonderful, Mr. Robinson? And there she is, dying.

I said, Yes. God's great. God's good.

She said, I love Jesus so much. And I finally said, Pam, let me pray with you. And I did my ministerial duty and went beyond I really had a love for, you know.

And I don't like the word ministerial duty. It makes me kind of sick. But I was trying to get away so I could cry.

And I prayed. And just when I got through, I said, Amen. And Pam clamped down tighter.

And she interrupted my Amen with her prayer. Dear God, you're so great. Brain tumor.

No hair. Paralyzed. You're so great, God.

I love you so much, God. I love you, Jesus. I love you.

I turned and walked out of there. And I said to my associate, I said, Have you ever seen anybody so full of life? He said, Never. There's a girl that was full of Jesus.

You know what she did the next night? They brought an ambulance out there on that football stadium field and unloaded that precious girl in a stretcher wrapped in a blanket with a little toboggan overhead. And I sent the microphone down to her. Johnny Cash was sitting on the platform, but he couldn't sing.

He started crying so hard because you see his 12-year-old brother died when a saw cut him in two. And Johnny watched him die. And Johnny watched him sing.

The angels are coming, mama. The angels are coming. And that night we nearly lost Johnny Cash for good because we put the microphone up in Pam's face and said, Say a word to the crowd, Pam.

25,000 people. You know what Pam said? God is so good. He's so great.

Pretty soon he's gonna send the angels to take me to heaven. Pam died a week later. God sent the angels to take her to heaven.

Friend, that little girl was an illustration of what happens in a person's heart when they've repented. You see, you may not be full of activities and you may not have possessions and you may not have pleasures that people see, but you're going to have the life and the joy of God filling your soul. Now listen to me, please.

I'm healthy. I'm healthy. I can run.

I can leap. I'm strong. And I want to tell you the same joy that fills that girl fills my heart because Jesus fills my life.

I've repented. I turned my eyes upon Jesus. He changed my life.

Folks, it's real to me. It's not a game. It's real to me.

It's not religion. It's not remorse or regret or reform. It's Jesus.

His redemptive power changed my walk, my direction, my talk, my life. He'll do the same for you. Please, please don't hold to religion and miss the joy of knowing Jesus.

Too many of you are like Lot's wife. You're still looking back. You have a longing for the world.

You know what I have? I have a longing for Jesus. I really do. And I've got things, but they're just dirt.

They really are. They're dirt. Jesus, he's the diamond.

He's the joy. Have you ever repented? Have you ever really been redeemed? Don't miss it, folks. It's too great.

As I sit here now in my own home and watch the scores of people coming forward to commit their lives to Jesus Christ, to repent, and to receive Christ into their heart, it is my prayer that all over America this scene might be multiplied. And although you're not walking forward, at the same time, you can, in your own home, in your own heart, invite Jesus Christ to come in. Repentance is the only hope we have.

If our nation is to survive, it will be because we repent. But you see, repentance begins in the heart of the individual. It's in your heart.

Admitting before God that simply being sorry for my sin, regretting what I've done, and having remorse is not repentance. Reforming and trying to do better is not repentance. Turning to religion is not repentance.

But rather to invite Jesus Christ into my heart, turning to him, automatically means that I'm turning from my way, my will, and my sins. And that is exactly what God wants you to do. So I pray that right there where you are, you might be willing to bow your head right now and simply say, God, I know that religion is not the answer.

I know that simply being sorry is not the answer. But God, I'm turning to you right now, right here where I am. I'm turning to you, and I'm inviting Jesus Christ to be my Lord and my Savior in genuine repentance.

Would you bow your head and pray that simple prayer? Dear God, forgive my sins. Come into my heart and into my life. Why don't you just repeat it after me? Father, I know I've sinned.

Forgive my sin. I turn to Jesus as my only Savior. I turn from my sin to him in faith.

Give me a new life, a new beginning, a new future. In Jesus' name, I thank you. You've prayed that very simple prayer.

Jesus said that we all come as little children with a childlike faith. The greatest decision you will ever make in your life is the decision to turn your life over to God, allowing him to possess what he purchased. He loves you.

He loves you just like you are. He loves you so much that he gave his Son to die for you. But in his great love, through repentance and faith in Jesus, he's given you the one cure for all of our sins, and that is his salvation, his forgiveness, and the ability to do his will, to have life now, life eternal, and yes, even life abundant.

So I thank God that you've prayed and asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart. I want to send you some material that will help you in your Christian life, and that's the title of the material that I've prepared for you, along with the help of some of my associates and staff. It's simple Bible lessons explaining to you what my new life in Christ really means.

And about my daily walk with Christ. Also, I'm sending you a little pamphlet that's titled, The Search for the Right Church, telling you how you can find the right church. Did you know these programs have come into your home tonight and through the next few days because someone in your own area really cares about you? These programs have no sponsor other than the love of God's people.

Love for you. The only reason they're on the air. The only reason you're able to hear this message of repentance and the message of hope is because someone else, having experienced that message and the power of the message and the power of Christ, says, I care about you.

Churches in your area have joined their hearts and hands to say to you, we love you and we care. They put aside certain differences they may have to present the truth and the answer. They've said, we love you.

We love one another. We want to help you. And so right now, you need to pick up the telephone or make your way to the phone, taking down the number.

Call the local number. If at all possible, call that number. If not, you may call the 800 number.

But right now, there are people waiting to take the call. Counselors that we have trained because we care about you. My staff has worked with them, helping them to be able to minister to you.

So as you call, a concerned friend will have a brief prayer with you and will see to it that you are sent the Bible study guides and the information that will help you. Please pick up the telephone right now and call to indicate, I've prayed to receive Christ. Or perhaps you'd like to ask questions and you need help and personal counsel.

Perhaps you've just made a new commitment of your life to Christ. And you said the television special really touched me, really blessed me and meant a lot to me. And so you take the time to call and say, it had an impact on my life.

I too want prayer and help. And you just share the desire of your heart and we will be sending you the Christian material on My Christian Life to help you understand the Word of God. The Bible, God's Word to you.

And you need to understand it and you need to get into a church where they preach the Bible, where people love you and care about you. And I encourage you to do that. Don't hesitate to become actively involved in a church.

You've really repented, turned your life over to God. The people in the church are not perfect. You're not perfect.

God is going to help you and He helps you through imperfect people who have His Word to share. That means you need to get into a church. And believe me, the churches that have sponsored this meeting, the Christians that have sponsored this telecast, this television outreach really care about you.

The pastors involved, they love you. They want to help you. Give them that opportunity.

Please pick up the telephone right now and call. If the line is busy, if it is busy, just hang up and dial again. Go ahead and write the number down because you could continue to call later in the night and you could even call through the week if you need to.

But please be persistent and continue calling until you get through and let us know that you have repented and received Christ into your heart so we can be a prayerful helper and friend. God bless you and thank you. I gave my life totally to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I asked Him to be Lord of everything. I said, Lord, I surrender. I give you my life.

And since that night, I've not been the same. You can be saved if you're willing to turn from yourself, open your heart to Christ, and let Him make you a new person. He did it for me.

Find Jesus Christ that you accept Him as your Savior and allow Him to change your lives the way that He's changed ours. Not only did I find America, the great country that I was looking for, but I found Jesus, and that was the most important thing I could have ever found.

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

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