

True Repentance - Pentecost Sunday

by John Powys

True repentance involves turning away from sin and towards God, and is necessary to receive salvation.

Duration: 54:16

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:23-24, Acts 2:36, Acts 2:38, Acts 2:40-41

Topics: "True Repentance", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of avoiding worldly entertainment and staying away from anything that defiles or dirties our lives. He challenges Christians to examine their priorities and asks if they spend as much time reading the Bible as they do watching videos or following sports stars. The preacher urges listeners to repent and turn away from sinful behaviors, emphasizing that confession alone is not enough. He highlights the need to save ourselves by actively choosing to distance ourselves from worldly influences and live a victorious life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

The first sermon that was preached under the power of the Holy Spirit. And we find that in Acts chapter 2. We won't read the whole chapter, we know it, I'm sure most of us know a lot of it. Acts chapter 2 and we'll read from verse 22.

This is Peter speaking. And he says, Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you, by miracles, wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves also know.

Him being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death. Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it. And then verse 36.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promises to you and to your children and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call.

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, be saved from this perverse generation. Then those who gladly received his word were baptized, and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. Shall we just pray once again? Lord, unless you work by your Holy Spirit, then all this is just history.

So we pray that you'll work as you did on this day of which we've read. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

The first thing we notice here is the man who preached this sermon. He could not have preached this sermon if something very dramatic hadn't happened in his life. And his life, his testimony, confirms that which he spoke.

I want to speak about repentance this morning. And Peter is a perfect example of true repentance. Not long before this day, Peter had sinned terribly.

He denied his Lord three times, and he did it in a terrible way. And now he stands up and he preaches a message. And when he speaks to these people, he doesn't say, the Lord whom we crucified.

He says, the Lord whom you crucified. How can Peter speak like that? If he just had to think back of what a coward he was and what a pub brook he was, then surely he cannot speak like this. But Peter stood there as a new creation, a new Peter.

The old Peter had died. His sins were forgiven. He had truly repented in the true sense of the word.

And he was now right with God. He was now full of the Holy Ghost. And now he could speak with that boldness that he spoke.

So Peter is a perfect example of true repentance. He spoke straight. It reminds me of the story in Acts chapter 13.

Where Paul, being full of the Holy Spirit, he spoke to that sorcerer, Elymas the sorcerer. And he said, you're a child of the devil. He called him a son of the devil.

Well, you cannot get any straighter than that. And yet we find this coward of the past, this man who had no backbone, who was dead scared of people, he speaks in that same bold way. Now I want us, let me look at this which Peter preached.

Remember, Jesus said that it's necessary that he goes away. He said if he doesn't go, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter would not come. He said, but when the Holy Spirit comes, he will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

That's what Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do. And that's what we see in this very first sermon at Pentecost, that he did exactly that. It was in Jerusalem, there where Jesus was crucified not long ago.

Many people in this crowd were probably the same people that were in the crowd that shouted crucify him. Many were not, many came from far away, they were not involved. But in this difficult place where all this had happened and where everything was still so fresh, this is where Peter stood up.

And his first words, the first words that he spoke to these people under the influence of the Holy Spirit were the words that we read. He first explained to them that these people are not drunk. And that they were seeing a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel.

Then he spoke to the congregation in front of him. He said, men of Israel hear these words. And he explained to them, he made it clear to them what they had done.

The Holy Spirit through Peter convicted them of their guilt. Now Jesus said the Holy Spirit will convict of sin. To convict means to persuade, to convince in a way that you have no doubt that it's you and you are guilty.

To convict, to be totally guilty and have no way out of that guilt. So the first thing he did, he convicted them that they crucified the Lord. Maybe they didn't knock the nails into his hands.

Maybe they didn't hoist the cross up and crucify him literally. But he says you crucified him. We remember David, King David.

He didn't murder Uriah with his own hands. He wasn't even at the scene of the murder. But God said you murdered him.

So we don't have to say, but I just, I wasn't there and I didn't do it. Maybe you sit and watch a dirty, filthy, worldly video and then you say, but I didn't put it on. I just happened to be there.

Or you saw somebody stealing something or doing something in darkness and you say, but I didn't do it. But you also kept your mouth shut. But the point is this, that the Holy Spirit convicted them of their guilt and their sin.

And as they stood there before Peter and the apostles, they didn't deny their guilt. But before we get to their response, let's just go to the next point that the Lord said the Holy Spirit would convict us of. He said he will convict the world of righteousness.

Because Jesus has gone to the father. That he is the righteous one. And we notice in those words that Peter spoke.

In verse 23 he said, he being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God. What he was trying to say to these people is that Jesus didn't die because he was too weak. Because many probably thought and many in Jerusalem said, ah, you see, he was.

He was a con man. He died and he's dead. Some stood by and said, if you are the Christ, save yourself and us.

So many were of the opinion that Jesus just in weakness surrendered and he died as a criminal. But Peter says it was by God's determined counsel and foreknowledge. He gave himself.

It wasn't just by the acts of men. He was in full control. He was the sovereign God.

There was no weakness in it. He says, but you took him by lawless, wicked hands and you crucified him. He says, but God raised him up from the dead.

And loosed the pains of death. He exalts the Lord here. He shows the Lord's righteousness that he was the righteous one, the Messiah.

That's the work of the Holy Spirit that after he's convicted us of sin, he reveals to us who Christ really is. That he is the righteous one. He is the Messiah.

He is the Holy one of God. And he's the only hope and the only way of salvation. And then the Lord said he would convict the world of judgment.

Because the prince of this world has been judged. And we see that as well in these words of Peter. That death could not hold him.

When it looked like Satan had the victory, that was when he was defeated. The prince of this world was judged at Calvary. He was robbed of his power.

And that's a warning to you and I. That if the prince of this world was judged, then we also will be judged. We will not escape God's judgment. And when these things were brought to bear on the minds of these people in Jerusalem, when they saw their sin and that their sin was against the righteous one of God, and that their prince, the prince of this world, the devil, was judged.

The Bible says when they heard this, they were cut to the heart. They were pierced, they were pricked in their hearts. They stood horrified, condemned before God.

They were sorry about what they'd done. They realized their guilt. And they feared God.

They feared his judgment. There was no way that they could worm their way out and try and justify their deeds. And then they must have realized the irreversible or irreversibility of their own deeds.

Our friend, sin is a terrible thing. When it's done, it cannot be reversed. It cannot.

You cannot undo it. You cannot reverse it. It's done.

You cannot turn the clock back. What's done is done. And we stand guilty before God.

And that's the work of the Holy Spirit. To convict us and to convict you of your sin. Only you know it.

Your secret sin. And God knows it. And the devil knows it.

But as you sit here, you know where you are guilty before God. Now that's wonderful. But you know that doesn't help anything.

This great work which the Holy Spirit does. It doesn't do anything. If you don't do something.

That's why these men cried out. They said, men and brethren, what must we do? It's wonderful if the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. And we can confess our sins and say, I'm a sinner.

I've sinned against God and God alone. It's wonderful. But it's not enough.

That doesn't save your soul. These men cried out, what must we do? This was only the first part. This was the work of the Holy Spirit.

But now, what must we do? And Peter answered. He said, repent. That's the first thing he said.

It's good to confess. It's good to admit I'm guilty. It's good to have sorrow over my sin.

It's good to be filled with a fear of God because of my sin. But friends, that doesn't help. It saves no man.

Unless we do something. Now, I love the word in verse 40. This translation of mine is not strong enough.

The original says, save yourselves. Oh my, now you'll think this man's preaching heresy. Because we are saved by grace.

Yes, you're right. We've just heard about the grace. It's pure grace that the Holy Spirit came.

It's grace that he should enlighten you and open your eyes and let you see your own guilt. And that's us between these four walls. Because there's millions and millions of lost souls out in that world.

Who have not yet experienced that grace. They've not yet heard the gospel. But we who are here, we hear the gospel.

And we hear it time and again. And the Holy Spirit convicts us again and again. And the words, the gospel is explained again and again.

We are drowning in the grace of God. But what do we do? It doesn't help that we have all these blessings and we have all the working of the Holy Spirit. But we don't do anything.

Peter said, repent. You've already acknowledged your sin. You've confessed it.

You fear God. Now repent. Turn around.

Stop with your sin. Change your mind. Walk in another direction.

Turn towards God. That's what repentance is. Not just to say I've sinned.

Not just to say I've sinned. But to stop with a sin. He said, save yourselves from this crooked generation.

Get away from your sin. Get away from your sinful friends. And can I dare to say from your sinful family.

He said, save yourself. Grab yourself and get away. How many young men have to confess time and again that I've lusted.

I've sinned with my own hands. But you sit and watch godless films and videos and you go to the movies in town. And you see half-naked woman and you hear blasphemy.

And then you wonder why you sin. Repent. Turn away.

Save yourself. Get away from that rubbish. You're in the world.

You go to the world. As uncle Erlo said last week. To the sports fields of this world.

With the godless and the godless spirit that reigns there. And then you wonder why I don't live a victorious life. You say, oh I don't know.

I don't have the power of the holy spirit. I can't live a victorious life. I've confessed my sins a hundred times.

Yes friend, but you've never repented. Get away from your sin. Get out of the world.

Away from those worldly friends. Even right here. You don't need worldly friends in Durban.

Or in Peter Maritzburg. Or in Joburg. Peter Maritzburg.

Right here in the school. Right here on the mission the devil will send his people. The lukewarm and the worldly ones who love the world.

Get away from them. Don't ask the lord to change them. You save yourself.

That's repentance. Where you physically do something about your sin. And your sinning friends.

Get away from them. Save yourself from them. And when Peter had spoken these words.

And many other words the bible says. Three thousand souls were saved. Three thousand souls did something.

I don't know how many just sat there. But three thousand did something. Have you repented? Yes you've confessed.

That's wonderful. But have you repented? Have you turned away from your wicked ways? Have you forsaken the world? And the worldly people that you love. And the lukewarm family that you love.

Now you might think well this man is sowing division here in families. Jesus said. Which is what? Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth.

He said I came to bring a sword to divide a family right in half. And that's what Peter was speaking about. What the holy spirit was saying through this man.

He said save yourself. Come away from them. You know false repentance.

One man of God said false repentance dreads the consequences of sin. But true repentance. Dreads the sin itself.

Not only the consequences. When you read about Judas Iscariot. You see he also repented.

When he realized what he had done and what the consequences were of his sin. He had sorrow. He realized his guilt.

And he repented the bible says. He was truly sorry. But only because of the consequences.

Not because of what he had done to the lord Jesus Christ. He only dreaded the consequences on him. He should have run to the lord.

But he ran to the gallows and he hung himself. His repentance was in the wrong direction. We've got to repent because we dread the sin.

Like some people dread snakes. I met a man in Switzerland. A lovely old man.

I said no you must come to Sissabantu. He said never. He says there's snakes in Africa.

He says I don't come to Africa. We tried to convince him no there's no snakes on the way to Sissabantu. He said never.

There's snakes in Africa. He dreads the snakes. There's such good things here in Africa.

But because of the snakes he says no ways I stay in Switzerland. Friends that's how we've got to dread sin. Now forgive me let me come back to sport and to videos and to the movies.

Ah we say you know a christian also needs some entertainment. And there's not anything wrong with sport. Ah and you know if we go to a movie house in Durban and there's a good movie.

You know it's not so bad. They only swear once or twice in the movie. They only use the name of the Lord Jesus in vain here and there.

But in general it's a good movie and it's got a moral to it. That's humbug. That's nonsense.

Friends if a thing is dirty and defiled by one swear word then it's defiled and it's dirty. We've got to ask ourselves you've got to ask yourself have I not perhaps grown lukewarm. What do you as a christian want from the world? What has it got to offer you? Where do you get the time for the world? For entertainment.

Worldly entertainment. I ask you where do you get the time? Tell me young people. Do you spend as much time reading this book as you do watching videos? Do you know your bible like you know your sports stars? If you don't then I tell you you're a lover of the world you're an enemy of God and you're on your way to hell.

You know the actors of Hollywood but you don't know the men of God of the bible. And you rest yourself you you comfort yourself in this that my parents are christians. I grew up in the revival.

But you love the world and you're an enemy of God finish and climb. 40 we see you are not a worldly christian. There are no such things as worldly christian.

If you still love this world and this crooked generation you're an enemy of God and you're bound for hell. And you need to repent. You need to take those worldly videos of yours and you need to burn them.

And your worldly music that you hide somewhere. And the radio that you use to listen to east coast radio and all this other devilish stuff. So you say oh I've got my radio because I listen to radio.

You are just deceiving and you are deceiving yourself. We as courtiers you'll go to hell with your radio. Because you're using it to listen to the things of this world.

Peter said save yourself from this crooked and perverse generation. From this lukewarm christianity. Always from this worldly church.

Save yourself from it. God is not going to save you from it. That's your part.

Get up and get away from it. Stop with your sin. Doesn't help to confess it.

If you're not going to stop it. You waste the counselor and a man or woman of God's time if you're going to confess it. But you've not resolved and made a decision that I'm never going back to it.

Now friend there where you are guilty. Where you've sinned. And where you guilty before God this morning.

Before you confess it now. Decide once and for all. Yes.

Regardless of what my friends say. Make a decision. That I'm going to repent.

I'm going to leave my sin. Let me just mention this other word in closing. He said repent and be baptized.

Now I'm not going to speak about baptism. But baptism is an outward sign and a testimony to all that I have repented. Now let's just take that symbol.

If you repent. Let's see it. Show it.

Let all know that I have repented. You cannot do it secretly. I remember a wonderful story.

It's not a story. I was there. Maybe I've told it before.

But if ever I saw an example of repentance without consulting flesh and blood it was this. I preached somewhere about television. The devil's vision that rubbish from hell.

And after the service. The man where I was staying. He had a television.

I didn't know it. So he asked if he could speak to me. And we went into a private room and he.

He really cried before God. He confessed this television set. That he'd sinned against God by bringing this thing into his home as a Christian.

He said to me will you take it in your car and burn it at Sizabantu. I thought wow this is really drastic. I said yes gladly if that's what you want.

If that's how you feel. The next morning when we were still in bed. We heard somebody on the roof.

This man was on the roof pulling the aerial out. His wife and his family didn't know what he's doing. Has he gone mad? What's my husband doing on the roof? He didn't tell his wife what he's doing.

He just ripped the aerial out the wires. He took it off and he chucked it all in the back room ready for us to burn. Only that evening.

He called his family and us together. And then he confessed before us and before his whole family how he'd sinned against God. He didn't first speak to his dear wife and say ah my dear wife you know what do you think? Should we get rid of this thing or not? I remember another man of God.

He also came one day and said you know God has convicted me of this television. A few weeks later when we went to his house he still had it. We said now what about the television? He said oh you know I'm waiting for the Lord to convict my wife and my children.

It's now 20 years later he's still got it. Still waiting for the Lord to convict his wife and his children. But this other man.

He did not consult his family. He repented and he repented properly. Until today he serves God with a burning heart.

Now friends on this Pentecost Sunday. What are you going to do? Have you got that cry in your heart? Lord what must I do? Now you know. Repent.

Go back home and do something about your sin. And let this day be a historical day in your life. That you'll never forget where everything changed.

Because the Bible says if you repent and you are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. You'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Maybe your life is dry and dull and there's no life and there's no gift within you.

Because you've never really repented. Now today is your day. Repent.

Not in words, indeed. Let us pray. Lord we thank you for this message that was preached nearly 2,000 years ago.

And that today it is brand new. Because your Holy Spirit is still the same. And Lord Jesus you said that when the Holy Spirit comes.

He will convict us of sin, righteousness and judgment. And you have not failed even till this day. Now Lord grant that we will do our part.

We ask you to glorify yourself. Amen.

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