

Out and Out Repentance

by John Sung

John Sung's sermon emphasizes the necessity of true repentance and the bearing of spiritual fruit as essential to the Christian faith.

Scripture: Luke 13:1-30

Topics: "Spiritual Fruitfulness", "Repentance"

Description

John Sung emphasizes the critical nature of repentance in his sermon 'Out and Out Repentance,' urging listeners to recognize the urgency of turning away from sin to avoid spiritual death. He illustrates this through biblical examples, such as the Galileans and the fig tree, highlighting that fruitlessness in faith leads to dire consequences. Sung recounts personal experiences with death and the importance of being spiritually alive and fruitful, warning against hypocrisy within the church. He calls for a heartfelt invitation to Jesus, stressing that true repentance leads to transformation and growth in faith. The sermon concludes with a poignant reminder of the dangers of hardening one's heart against the Holy Spirit's prompting.

Transcript

Luke Ch. 13

"Open wide the heart-door, Let Jesus come in."

Vs 1-5 Tonight we go one step further into the doctrine of repentance, that we may understand deeper its importance. During Jesus' day there were Galileans who went to Jerusalem to sacrifice. These were killed by Pilate whose blood he mixed with their sacrifices. Don't regard these Galileans as being more sinful than others!

When the tower of Siloam fell and crushed 18 to death, let us realize that if we do not repent we shall likewise perish.

Nowadays we often hear of tragic deaths. Don't regard these who suffer to be greater sinners. If we don't repent we die likewise.

During the Shanghai War, the situation at Chapei was tragic beyond description. All China stands in the same place for destruction if we don't repent.

Here Jesus twice declares the unrepentant are doomed. Repentance is truly the first step to becoming a Christian.

At age nine I saw my little sister die. She was placed in a small coffin. She was taken to the field to be buried. I asked mother where sister was going. Mother said, "your sister is dead. Her soul has gone to heaven." I have felt a chill since then whenever I see anyone die. I'm still afraid to see a corpse. A voice has said to me, "The unrepentant shall die likewise."

Two months ago I received news of my father's death. I realized father's illness was for a short while. No son of his was by his side. I didn't know it after many days. Brothers and sisters, this is life. If we don't repent we shall perish. Have you heard the Lord knocking on your door? Have you truly repented?

Vs 6-9 There was a fig tree planted in a vineyard. What a blessed fig tree! After three years of cultivation it produced no fruit. The landlord had waited one year after another; but was disappointed. God has nurtured us for years. Have we yielded any fruit? The master of the vineyard seeing there was no fruit wanted to chop it down. The greatest sin in the world is fruitlessness. Beloved brothers and sisters, God has nurtured you not three but ten or scores of years. You've read your Bible. You've heard many sermons. But have you borne any fruit? You've attended revival meetings, life-deepening meetings, you're thoroughly nurtured. If you don't produce fruit, beware the axe! Brothers and sisters, many there are who produce evil fruit (womanizing, gambling, drinking, smoking, etc.). They block up the road to heaven. What fruit do you bear? If bad fruit, beware the axe! Beloved brothers and sisters, have you heard this voice? If you do not repent, you'll bear no fruit. If you don't bear fruit, neither will your loved ones and friends, your children, believe the Gospel. Unfruitful. Why?

Vs 10-17 Jesus was teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath day when there came an old woman bent double. A hunchback cannot look up to heaven. Her back is loaded with sin. Not able to look up, she saw only money, but not God. For 18 years! She had an empty name of a Church member. Some carry the empty name of elder or deacon. When Jesus saw the hunchback woman He took pity on her immediately. He released her from the burden of sin. Her back became straight. She glorified God. Sad to say, some Church members, when they saw this, became angry. They rebuked Jesus for breaking the Sabbath --- for He had worked! These who kept to the ceremonial law, but disregarded repentance, salvation, rebirth, were hypocrites. Elders, deacons and lay people who bear no fruit bring down the Church. What can be expected as fruits from members who have never repented nor been born again? The reasons why a Church is barren are:

1) Members are bound by Satan.

2) Members are hypocrites. This hunchback woman being freed by Jesus found immediate freedom, praising God.

Vs 18, 19 Life must grow. Now the mustard seed is the smallest of all. But when planted it becomes a tree that gives shelter to the birds. Metal and wooden instruments and utensils cannot grow, for they are lifeless. Children can grow because they have life. A person truly born again, truly saved, must grow.

The principal of a school in Tsinan told me how wicked a certain girl student was. She was the ringleader of a school strike. One night she came to the meetings. The next morning she came of herself to Church to confess her sins. She was totally changed. This thrilled the whole school.

I returned to Tsinan the year following. Another principal told me of this girl's changed character. At which a girl student chimed, "Her parents and whole family are saved, while she is preparing to enter seminary."

A certain pastor who had a temperamental, quarrelsome wife came to see me. This couple had children studying in the university. Whenever they saw their parents quarrel they became utterly disheartened and sick. This pastor told me his troubles, asking me to pray for his wife. She came to hear me and repented. She confessed her faults to her husband. Praise the Lord! The whole family now was turned to happiness.

A certain young lady loved make-up. She spent her days immersed in cosmetics. She wept for her sins in repentance. She changed to all simplicity, a total transformation. Any life must grow and bear fruit.

Vs 20, 21 When a man is born again, is saved, he begins to help the Church to prosper. A Shanghai woman, having believed, brought many to Jesus. If we are truly born again we must lead many relatives and friends to Christ.

A sister of Tsingtao, upon her new birth, brought a hundred in her school to Christ. A born-again person is like yeast that leavens up the whole lump of meal. Believing women are the best yeast. So God has held women in high esteem.

Vs 22-30 Enter in the narrow gate. Brothers and sisters, those not born again can bear no fruit. Those not bearing fruit are hypocrites. Neither can they enter the narrow gate. But we must enter, for when it is shut and we are left standing outside, Jesus will not recognize us. Saints old and new will be seated around God's table, but we will be cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Many regard themselves too young to believe for they think they have many years in the world. Many heart-doors are being knocked at by the Holy Spirit, but they do not welcome Him. So they smother His promptings, but how dangerous!

A certain girl student, having heard the Word, confessed her sins 3 times. Yet her heart remained troubled. She did finally open up her "coffin-heart". Joy filled her soul.

Another surnamed Kuan heard the Word with no moving of heart. I said to him, "Your surname should be Kai (open) instead of Kuan (closed)." I prayed with him and he confessed his sins.

In Kirin there was a pastor. He stiffened his neck at the first impact of my preaching. After three days and three nights did he confess, he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He held revival meetings in Kirin and evangelized around, giving glory to God's name.

Brothers and sisters, many harden their heart, reject the Holy Spirit's knocking on their door, so that He cannot enter. They come to Church on Sunday, they worship, they sing, they pray, they read the Bible, and what not. But as they so come to Church so they go home, empty of any benefit, bound by Satan, they are all bound by the chains of money, perfectly helpless. Pity!

There was a sister in Shanghai whose two sons were bound by Satan. During the Shanghai War, both of them were killed by shrapnel. She came to Church blaming God for not protecting them. Beloved brothers and sisters, you've believed the Gospel for years. But you're still swayed by money and power. You're looking to man and not to God. On your hunchback is a load of sin, getting heavier with the years. Pity! Open wide the heart-door. Invite the Spirit into your heart.

Oh, never, never smother the prompting of the Spirit. Open wide the heart-door. Invite the Spirit into your heart.

Vs 31-35 Jesus went up to Jerusalem with His disciples. Many urged Him not to go. Jesus said, "I have three more days to work. Casting out devils on the first day, healing the sick the second day and on the third day I must go on to Jerusalem. Though a prophet must die in Jerusalem, yet I must go. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often have you killed the prophets. Your heart is hard like stone. How often I would have gathered your children like a mother hen her chicks. But you would not. Look! Your opportunity has gone! Henceforth you will become a desolate field." Beloved brothers and sisters, never, never smother the Holy Spirit's prompting. Do not be stiff-necked like Jerusalem. If you shut your heart-door refusing the Holy Spirit, He will depart from you!

There was a girl student who stole a ring and a gold watch. On hearing the Word she was moved by the Holy Spirit. Her heart palpitated hard. She went back to school troubled. At the third story she met a classmate who asked her why she looked sad. She said, "Because of this." showing her the ring and gold watch. To return the gold watch was simpler than returning the ring upon which she had engraved her name. How? To return it would entail loss of face. For the sake of face, she was burdened by sadness and a troubled heart eating or waking. She could stand it no longer. She wrapped the ring in a piece of paper. She jumped down from a third story window. She killed herself. She went to hell with the ring. Brothers and sisters, how are you? Have you invited the Spirit in?

Finally, the principal discovered the little packet. When he opened it there was the gold ring and these words on the wrapper, "My heart has died! I cannot repent!" How pitiful!

Brothers and sisters, will you open your heart-door and let Jesus come in?

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