

(Am I Saved?) 3- Except Ye Repent

by Michael Pearl

Repentance is a natural human trait that involves turning away from sin and turning towards God, and is not about feeling sorry for sin or getting saved.

Duration: 44:26

Scripture: Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:15, Luke 5:32, Luke 19:10, John 3:16, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9

Topics: "True Repentance", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, Michael Pearl emphasizes the importance of having a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ. He challenges the listeners to examine their hearts and question whether Jesus is truly the center of their lives. He warns against relying on external signs of spirituality, such as speaking in tongues or performing miracles, if one's heart is not truly surrendered to Christ. Pearl shares a personal anecdote about a man who had an emotional experience at a camp meeting but later rejected the gospel, highlighting the need for true repentance and a transformed life.

Transcript

Alright, last week we talked about being born again. This week we're going to talk about repentance. Probably one of the most misunderstood words in the Bible.

Most people think repentance is a spiritual word. They think it is something divine that God thought up. And it's not at all.

In fact, I read it in cowboy books. I have to read it on the computer, on the news. The word repent doesn't have a connotation.

You have to give it one. In other words, one can be driving down the highway to go to the grocery store to buy eggs and then remember that you bought eggs yesterday. So you repent, you turn around, you go back home.

Or you could be deciding that you're going to buy a piece of property. And you go look at it and start to pay down on it and then you repent, decide you don't want to buy that piece of property. Or you can be a democrat and decide that you're going to be a republican and you repent and you become a republican instead of a democrat.

So there are all kinds of ways of repenting. There's been all kinds of definitions given for repentance. Most people equate some sort of sorrow with repentance because there in Corinthians he said that Godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of.

And since most people think repentance is something you do to get saved, that it's some step in salvation, they think therefore when it says Godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of, that the kind of repentance that saves you must have something to do with sorrow or must be preceded by some kind of a godly sorrow. And so all preachers have the idea of preaching people under conviction, preaching them into sorrow. And so they would preach to work people into a deep sorrow for their sin and out of that sorrow and grief they would have an experience of renouncing their sin and coming to God and getting saved.

And so people think of sorrow, godly sorrow, as something that's an essential necessary element of biblical New Testament repentance. In the context of that verse Paul is not talking about salvation at all. He's talking about having written a letter to him.

He said I wrote a letter to you and I made you very sorry when I wrote the letter because I said some hard things to you in 1 Corinthians. In writing 2 Corinthians he said I repented almost of having written the letter. Wrote the letter and I thought boy I shouldn't have written that letter.

But no, I didn't really repent. He said because I know that the sorrow that that letter worked in you produced a repentance in regard to kicking a man out of the church. Didn't have anything to do with getting saved.

And that godly sorrow that you had when I wrote you the letter worked a repentance in kicking the man out of the church not to be repented of you went through with this thing that I told you to do concerning this sinning Christian. So he wasn't talking about salvation at all and so to yank that passage out of its context and assume that Christian New Testament getting saved repentance is something about sorrow is a total misuse of dishonesty of the scripture. Some people think of repentance as turning from sin.

The term repent of sin never appears in the Bible anywhere at any time. Never says that. In fact when you take the word repent and look it up in connection with salvation in Acts 20, 21 he says repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

So biblical saving repentance is not you looking at your sin and deciding that you're going to deal with it. That you're going to somehow feel sorry for your sin. Or that you're going to stop doing your sin.

Or you're going to renounce your sin and come for God to save you. No. Bible repentance is you looking at your sin and your condition and deciding that it's hopeless.

That there's nothing you can do in regard to it. It's being sorry that you sinned and realizing that that cuts no ice with God. He's just not impressed that you're sorry for your sin.

He just really doesn't care because what you ought to be for having sinned is very very sorry. And what you ought to be after you're saved is very very sorry that you sinned. But there's no virtue in being sorry.

I go to prisons all the time and everybody there is sorry. They're sorry they murdered. They're sorry they raped.

They're sorry they killed. They're sorry they got caught. They're sorry they can't quit being queers right there in the prison.

They're sorry that they stabbed a guard. They're sorry they get mad and mean. They're sorry they cussed out their ex-wife on the telephone last week.

They're all sorry. They're sorry individuals. Sorry for their life.

But God's not impressed. And so sorrow is a natural human trait that we have from time to time over issues that has nothing to do with getting saved, repentance. Jesus in the book of Luke is teaching Luke chapter 13.

Turn to it just a moment. There were present at that season some that had told of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. So as Jesus is standing there someone begins to tell a current event.

Hey, did you see what happened in the news today? No, what happened? Well, Pilate killed some Jews, drained their blood out and then mixed it with animal blood and put it on the altar to pay for sins. Wow, man, that's a terrible thing to do to somebody. That's awful.

Here's that Jesus response. Jesus answered and said to them, suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? They did. They supposed that they must have been pretty bad sinners to get that kind of treatment.

I tell you nay, but except you repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Now that wasn't very kind. That wasn't very sympathetic and understanding.

They're just kind of standing around shooting the ball and somebody walks up and says, hey, did you hear about those terrible people that committed such crimes that Pilate killed them and mixed their blood and offered as a sacrifice? Jesus said, you think they're worse sinners? Well, yeah, probably. He said, I want to tell you something. If you don't repent, you're going to perish in the same fashion.

And then of those 18, he's still speaking. This is another current event someone told about. Those 18 upon whom the tower in Salome fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem? So they were building a tower and had all the stones being stacked up there, maybe creating an archway in it or something and had some supporting structure and supporting scaffolding and up there trying to hoist up a big keystone and put it in place and something snapped and broke and it began to fall and rocks started cascading and the scaffolding gave way and crush, smack, break, crunch, splash, 18 of them dead under a big pile of rock rubble.

People said, well, they must have done something bad, something sinful for God to kill them like that. Jesus said, if you don't repent, you're going to perish in the same fashion. In other words, rocks are going to fall on you and kill you and squash you.

The Bible says of Jesus that he's the rock of offense, the stone of stumbling and those who don't believe on him, the rock will fall on them and grind them to powder. In the book of Daniel, he has a story of a rock cut out without hands coming down the mountain and destroying the nations of the earth. So Jesus is the rock that will bring judgment and if you don't repent, he said you'll perish in the same way.

So, you know, we need to consider, have we repented? Did you repent? Have you repented? If you haven't repented, you're not saved. Now, there's a lot of preachers that go around taking this concept I just delivered that you must repent to be saved and to question the Christian, did you repent? And then the Christian has to go back and try to figure out at the moment he got saved, if he repented, you know, that here I have been a Christian for 15 years and now I suddenly realize I didn't repent. That's all a bit silly.

You know, it's like if you were a kid and I sent you to the grocery store to get some salt, sugar and crackers and you got in the grocery store and you go through and you pick out the items and look at some more things and get you a stick of candy and kind of hang around and put it all in the sack after you paid for it and you're heading home and you're walking home and your little brother says to you, did you get the salt? You picked it up, didn't you? No, I think you picked it up. Yeah, maybe I did. Well, did we get the salt or not? You know, I don't remember for sure if he checked this out, if we got the salt.

Did I lay it on the counter or didn't I? Well, I don't remember putting it in the sack. Let's go back and see. Let's go back to the grocery store and see if we got the salt.

No, let's know what you do. What would you do? You'd look in your sack, right? If you've got the salt now, it doesn't matter whether or not you remember picking it up or checking it out. The question is, do you have the salt right now? And if you do, then your memory is not essential to the salt or your salvation.

So some people try to define repentance in several very narrow terms that cause people to go back and search their past experience and their memory to see if they did it just right so that they would be saved. You see, repentance is such a nature that it's not an event, it's a state into which you enter. Repentance is not something you perform at some point in life.

Having performed it, you go on from there. Repentance is a new perspective. It's a new way of viewing God, yourself, your sin, and life.

Repentance is not a one-time doing. It's entering into a different state. And if you, in fact, did repent and believe the gospel and were saved, then you're still repenting right now.

And the test is not, did you meet all the criteria for repentance at that moment of salvation? The test is, are you still repenting right now today? You say, well, what kind of repenting is it I should still be doing? The same kind that you originally did to be saved. Now, what was the original repentance that you did to be saved? The Bible says repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. See, all repentance is a turn.

Repentance is not a sentiment. It's a turn. If I'm walking north and I decide that I want to go south, I must turn around and go back south.

Now, repentance is not me walking north saying, I'm really sorry I'm walking north. I wish I was walking south. That's not repentance.

I feel so bad about walking north and after all, God judges your heart, not your actions, and I'd love to walk south, but I just don't have the courage to. I think I'll just keep walking north. That's not repentance, is it? Repentance is stopping going north and starting going south.

Okay, then someone wants to break it down. Do you repent before you stop going north? Do you repent at the moment you stop or must you make your turn and then you've repented or is it after you've resumed

your travels to the south that you've repented? That reminds me of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. But all the theologians discuss it now for years, so we'll discuss it, all right? See what we can swallow or spit out.

So here we are walking north and I repent of going north and so I start going south. You see, the issue is not the mental processes that I go through. The issue is not all of these personal experiences I have.

The issue is, which way are you going right now? Are you still going north or are you now going south? You join a traveler on the road and he's going north, you say, you know, you shouldn't be going north. It's dangerous up there. You should be going south.

He said, well, I repented about a year ago. You did? Yeah. Yeah, I realized I was going the wrong direction.

I turned around and I started going south. But you're going north right now. Yeah, I know, but I repented one time, but I'm just going north for a little while.

I don't think you're offended. You see, people who find out that you shouldn't be going north because it's dangerous and start going south, they don't turn back around and go north again. If they do, then they didn't really repent.

You see, repentance is not an act of the will. It's not something that you just decide to do. A lot of people's humility is an act of the will.

In other words, Lord, help me be humble. I've got to be humble. Somebody says something to me, all right, I'm going to be humble.

No response. See, I'm mommy, so I'm not going to talk back to you. But I'm thinking how proud you are, so I'm just going to keep my mouth shut because I'm voluntarily humble.

I'm willfully humble. So I'm sitting here and I'm keeping my mouth shut. And so I think I formulated an answer that I can give you that doesn't make me look too proud, but kind of dresses you down.

So I formulated an answer. That's voluntary humility. That's willful humility.

As long as you're on guard, it works. As long as you're attentive and have self-control, that kind of humility will work. But it's not humility that really comes from the heart.

It's just a feigned action. A lot of people's repentance is like that. They decide that they're going to repent and stop sinning and get right with God and believe the gospel, so they stop going north.

They start going south, wishing they were north, but going south. And then they get off guard and they start going back north again and they're sorry and they force themselves to go south a little while and they're going back north some more. And that's not biblical repentance.

That's an act of the will to change your actions and it won't save you. You see, biblical repentance, the person who experiences it doesn't even know what to call it usually and doesn't know he's repenting and doesn't know it's happening. The proof of it is that tomorrow, instead of going north, he's headed south.

And the rest of his life, he's headed south. You say, are you talking about living differently? You got to start living holy? No, I'm not talking about that at all. I'm talking about there must be a change in regard to one thing in particular in repentance.

There must be a complete reversal. I'm not talking about the way you live. A complete reversal.

You say, what is it? Repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. See, all repentance involves a turn from something to something. Going north, a turn from going north, a turn to go south.

All repentance involves a turn. The nature of that turn is not defined in the word repent. So the Bible must define the meaning of repent.

You cannot allow theologians to do it. The Bible defines it as toward God. So if my repentance is turning toward God, God in the south, not the north, which He is, by the way.

So if I turn to the south, where God dwells, and turn away from the north and turn to the south, if I repent toward God, what am I repenting from? What am I repenting from if I repent toward God? So you're repenting from sin. No. Because in the Bible, you remember Judas? Judas repented from his sin.

Judas was a thief. He stole. Judas, a lazy bum seeking to advance himself with stealing money, ended up being highly trusted by Jesus.

So much so that he got to carry the money for all 13 of them. And whenever Jesus wanted to give money to poor people, he'd tell Judas, go give him this, give him that. Wanted some food? Judas, go buy the food.

And so Judas saw the chips, the way they were falling, and decided that Jesus was going to be crucified. Things were going to go down bad. And he decided to make a little profit on it, 30 pieces of silver.

So he went to the high priest and he said, I'll sell him to you for 30 pieces of silver. I'll tell you where he's hiding out. The Bible tells us why he did it.

Because he loved money. He was a thief. And so Judas sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

And then he saw Jesus carried off after kissing him in the garden, saw him carried off, saw him beaten, saw what he suffered, and suddenly Judas changed his mind about what he'd done. He got very sorry that he'd sold Jesus. And he'd give anything to undo it, including the 30 pieces of silver.

So he takes his money and he goes back to the temple. He said, I'm sorry I sold Jesus. I did the wrong thing.

I'm going to give you the money back. You give me Jesus back. He repented, didn't he? He was going north to sell Jesus out.

And he turned and started going south to buy him back and undo what he did. The priest said, we don't want your blood money. He threw it down the floor showing his sincerity.

This man had given up money as his pursuit. So much that he threw the money in the floor and said, I'm through with it. I've done the wrong thing.

He was certainly sorry, and he should have been. It was a proper sorrow to be sorry for the sin he'd done. He'd made amends too.

He gave the money back. And so he went out and hung himself. You say, well, did he go to heaven? The Bible said he went to perdition, to hell.

Judas died and went to his own place, to hell. Why didn't his repentance save him? Because that's not saving repentance. Saving repentance is toward God, not away from sin.

Judas turned away from his sin. That didn't save him. And then there's another character in the Bible.

Simon is a sorcerer. And he repents of his sorcery in the book of Acts. He decides that's not the proper way to go.

He stops being into witchcraft and sorcery and he joins the Christians. And he's baptized in water and he praises God for his deliverance from a life of sin and witchcraft and darkness. And he's among the Christians.

And one day he sees the apostles lay hands on somebody and they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And miracles take place. And Simon says, man, that is a power like I never had when I was into witchcraft.

I'd love to have that power. So he goes to the apostle and he says, how much money? I'll make a donation to the church. I'll make a big offering to the church for God and for all these poor people's stuff.

If you'll give me that power to lay hands on people so they can be healed and miracles will take place. You know what the apostle said to him? He said, your money go to hell with you. Your money perish with you.

He said, you're in the bond of iniquity and the gall of bitterness. He said, you have no part in this. Simon wasn't saved.

He repented of his old life. He stopped his life of witchcraft. But there was something missing in Simon.

You know what it was? It was his heart. His heart. You have no part in this.

He said, his heart was not right with God. God didn't have his heart. God had his lifestyle.

God had his commitment. God had his confidence. But he didn't have his heart.

The test was not, Simon, do you remember repenting right? The test is, Simon, where's your heart right now? Are you a man who is repentant toward God? He was not. You see, Simon never turned his heart to God. Judas, when he repented, didn't turn his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He just was fearful over his sin. I've seen a lot of people get fearful over their sin. And panic, man.

Panic. Get scared to death over their sin. Scared of going to hell.

Hear a sermon on hell? Their sinfulness? And come down an aisle and start bawling and crying and beg God to save them from hell. They don't get any more saved than a person would watching Star Wars. No salvation in it all.

You know why? Because that was just a selfish sinner finding out he's in trouble for the way he's lived. Wanting to get out of trouble. And thinking God is the answer.

You know what that man lacked? He lacked repentance toward God. See, repentance and faith are the same thing. One is stating it negatively, repentance.

And faith is stating it positively. The proof that they're the same thing is that about 120 times in the New Testament it speaks of faith, or believing, to be saved. And about a dozen times it speaks of repentance and belief as the way to salvation.

And about two or three times, I've forgotten the exact number, it speaks of repentance alone as the way of salvation. It says that repentance and remission of sin should be preached to Israel. So, if you repent according to Jesus, you won't perish.

If you believe according to Jesus, you won't perish. If you repent and believe, you won't perish. Therefore, if A equals D and C equals D and A and C equals D, then A and C are the same thing.

Now, repentance is stating it negatively. If you look in the Bible at the times that God tells someone to repent as opposed to telling them to believe, it's always to someone who is aggressively walking north with their back turned mainly towards I will not go south, I'm going north. Aggressively walking the wrong direction.

And He tells them, you need to repent. But if it's somebody just laudering around going no direction at all, He tells them, go south. He doesn't say, stop going north.

If you look at the people that Jesus spoke to, He said to the scribes and Pharisees, repent. He said to the common people, prostitutes, believe. He said to the publicans, believe.

He said to the scribes with their views of Judaism, He said, you need to repent. So, He said repentance to people that had chosen an alternative to God, to the Lord Jesus Christ. The people who were actively committed to a false belief system, He told them to repent.

But the people who were just buried in sin, He told them to believe. So today, if we were following Jesus' pattern, if I were to go out on the street and find a drunk prostitute, queer, and preach the gospel to them, I wouldn't tell them to repent. What do they think you're telling them to do? They think you're saying, hey, get straight, get you a suit and a tie, and clean up, and get yourself straightened out, and start living right, you know, and get real sorry for your sins.

A helpless sinner is not going to do any of that. Can't. That would be discouraging to him.

I'm not going to tell them to repent. You know what I'm going to tell them? I'm going to say, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. I'm going to offer him a hand up to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith.

That's all. Nothing for him to do. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the positive side. But if I were out on the street preaching and Jehovah's Witnesses said to me, I don't believe Jesus is God, I'd say, you'd better repent or you'll perish. I'd say, if you don't change your mind about the Lord Jesus Christ, or if I were out there talking to a guy and he said, I'm an atheist, I don't believe there is a God, I'd say, you'd better repent or you're going to perish.

If I were out there talking to a Buddhist, or a Roman Catholic, or a Baptist, who said anything that indicated they were rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ and rejecting truth or some alternate belief system, then I'd say to them, you must repent or you'll perish. And that's exactly the way Jesus and the apostles used the terminology. It is a pitiful thing when someone trying to preach the gospel goes to a down and out sinner and tells them they need to repent.

That's always a work for them. They're in bed, sick with a disease and dying, and you're telling them, you need to get well. Well, then he's a doctor.

But if a guy jumps up out of the bed and says, there's nothing wrong with me, I know I'm not dying, and he starts running down the hall to go home, pulling the tubes out, I'll say to him, you need to repent. You need to get back here and submit to treatment. Do you understand the difference? So, have you repented toward the Lord Jesus Christ? The one thing that we're missing as sinners is something that Adam lost.

When Adam chose to disobey God and eat the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he repented from God. Do you understand what I just said? He repented from God when he ate and disobeyed God. Adam reordered the world system.

God set the world system up so that man should live in fellowship to God, trust to God, faith to God, subjection to God, confidence, love toward God. Not independence, not rebellion, not self-sufficiency, not self-seeking, not self-gratifying, but in fellowship with God. And Adam says, hang it, God.

Take it and stuff it. I'm not going to go with you. I'm not going to follow you, your system, or your ideas, or your concepts.

I'm going to do my thing my way and I'm going to have some pleasure. And Adam unrepented. He repented away from God.

And the whole human race, your babies, everybody is born separate from God with a primary focus of the flesh. That's the focus of the little children sitting in this room. Their focus is the flesh.

Feeding it, resting it, cooing it, tickling it, scratching it, preferring it above all things. That's the vanity and that's the lot of humanity. It's not sinful in itself, but it results in time and maturity and sinfulness because when the child becomes aware of true values, they reject the true and the good values for selfishness.

When the child grows up and gets to be 13 or 14 years old, you know what he needs to do? He needs to repent toward God. He's been living his life without God. He needs to repent toward God.

He needs to repent toward God and have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And folks, that's not a religious experience. That's not an event.

That's a change. As permanent as the change Adam made. Adam reversed the situation.

God, I'm on my own. Repentance toward God is reversing that situation and saying, okay God, I'm back on your side. You're back in charge.

I'm back to believing. I'm back to loving. I'm back to trusting.

You're my focus. You're my purpose. You're my destiny.

You are my foundation. You are my everything. It is turning from whatever prevents you from coming to God.

Repentance is turning from everything by turning to God. Now I'm thankful that in going north into sin and independence See, God's down here at the south enthroned. So I'm going north into self-sufficiency.

Maybe not a great deal of evil but just self-consciousness, self-awareness, self-fulfillment. I'm walking along and I must repent toward God. Now, this is very important.

Some people define repentance in such a way that I'm wading through this morass of sin and repent towards God. I've got to get out of it, kind of clean myself off and then make this turn. Nope.

Repentance toward God is just saying I'm through with this. I want God to be the center. And folks, He just reached down and yanks you out of all that and turns you in to face Him.

It's not my work. Repentance is not my doing any more than faith is. Repentance is not an activity.

It's not an action. It is a refocus on the Lord Jesus Christ. That's all.

It is a focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people preach what they call Lordship Salvation. That is, that you've got to make Jesus the Lord of your life to be saved.

If that's true, none of us are saved yet. That is, if there's one area where Jesus is not Lord, then we wouldn't be saved, would we? If we had a Lordship Salvation. So repentance is not me making a commitment to stop all these sins and being sorry for each and every sin.

It is turning toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, it's like getting married. When I got married, I gave up a lot of pretty, charming girls.

I did. I had a lot of fine girlfriends, you know. Girlfriends in every state.

Because I traveled and preached. And everywhere I went there were girls. And I liked them all.

Some of them I even talked to. So when I got married, I said no to all of them. And I sealed my fate with one charming, lovely woman.

Sexiest one in the group. And so I chose her above all the others. I'd have a girl I'd like for a couple months, you know.

And another one I'd like for a couple months or something. And those were just temporary decisions. They were reversible.

Take one out to buy a hamburger. Small, please. No extra cheese.

And that's a reversible decision. You don't have to marry them. Just because you bought them a hamburger.

But when I said to her, let's get married a week from now. And we got married. And I said, I do.

I made a covenant. For as long as we live. Never to separate.

And getting and repenting towards God is that. It is something that is eternal. It's permanent.

It doesn't change. That is forever. Now, let's see if you have repented towards God.

Let's test you out. Let's look in the bag and see if there's salt there. The Bible does say you're the salt of the earth.

Say, how will I know if there's salt there? Well, somebody might tell you if you're going to church and tithing. Or somebody else will tell you if you're witnessing or reading your Bible or whatever like that. And all that's just surface stuff.

Just fluff. The Bible says the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we're His. If you've repented towards God, then He is your focus every single day.

He is the focus of all your decisions. He is the purpose of your life. You do not live a life independent of a consciousness of Him and what this means to Him.

That means that if you've repented towards God, you don't go in and get on the computer and look at pornography on the web. No one who's repented towards God could sit in front of a computer and look at pornography on the web. Now, I'm not saying a person couldn't in a moment of weakness do that once, maybe twice.

And then suddenly the Spirit of God is so grieving, so tormenting, so tearing at His soul. There's such a loss, such a loneliness, such an emptiness of His failure that that repentance is still working there. He turns to God fully, confesses, weeps, sorry for His sin, and becomes desperate the rest of His life never to do that again.

And He walks in truth and holiness. Yes, it's possible that a saved person could be lured at work by a wicked woman and commit fornication. But I'll tell you what a saved person doesn't do.

He doesn't unrepent. His heart cannot be placed on the woman that's not his wife and stay there. His heart cannot be placed on pornography.

It cannot be placed on stealing. It cannot be placed on lying, thieving, selfishness, drunkenness, drugs, alcohol, things like that. If your heart has been given to God and you've repented to Him, that's where it abides.

And any sin that comes into your life comes in the middle of a heart that craves God more than anything else. And if the flesh momentarily fails, it has to confront a heart that's pure with God. And there's going to be a conflict and a struggle there like you've never seen in your life.

Because sin is going to be dwelling in an alien body that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. A tabernacle where God dwells. And that sin is not going to be comfortable or welcome.

If sin is comfortable in your body, in your mind, if sin can lodge there for days without being driven out by the presence of God, you've never repented toward God. You've never made that permanent decision to turn your heart to God and love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, body, and strength. That's never happened to you.

You experienced a man-made temporary repentance. You experienced a Judas repentance, a Simon repentance, a repentance of the will, an act, a one-time event that you think somehow in your history is going to make a difference in eternity. And it won't.

So Jesus said, except you repent, you'll perish. Have you repented? Repentance and faith are the same thing. Negative and positive are the same act.

Repentance is telling you what to do. Turn. Faith is telling you where to turn to.

To God. Repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ is what Paul said we've been preaching. And anybody who preaches anything else is a liar and a deceiver.

And if you believe something else, you've been deceived. So today, correct your doctrine and do what Paul said in another place. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

You know, salvation is such an easy thing, but for some people it's so hard and so far, far, far away. Because if you don't love God's righteousness, if you don't love truth, if you don't love holiness, you'll never be saved. You can't be.

I have seen the lowest, worst sinners sat in front of a 17-year-old prostitute girl one night. Sat on the grass somewhere talking to her. I don't remember where.

I was about 20, 19 or 20. She was used on the street. Didn't live at home.

She was used out, you know, prostitute. And she was not just sorry for her life. She was lonesome for God and holiness and purity.

She was. And it was so easy for her to get saved. So easy for her to believe the gospel and let the Lord Jesus Christ embrace her and save her and forgive her.

So easy. And yet, I've seen good Christian, quote, people struggle for years and never get saved when that little old prostitute could. And you know, she knew so little.

After she got saved, somebody walked up and said, Did you repent? She said, He didn't mention that. If you'd have walked up to her after she got saved and said, Did you make Jesus Lord of your life? She said, How did I do it? I want to do it. Tell me how.

If you'd have walked up to her and said, Well, have you made your commitment? What? My what? My what? Did I miss something? She didn't understand anything except God loves her, wants her, forgives her that Jesus died and paid the price. And if she comes like she is, He'll take her. That's all she understood.

And that was enough to get her born again. And never to go back in sin. But there are others who, I remember one night we had a meeting.

We were going to a camp meeting. I was about 17. Boy, I witnessed everybody I saw when I was 17 years old.

I witnessed the people, I'd get in the grocery store and start hollering at people. I mean, I just irritated people everywhere. And I'd hang out the windows, driving along and hollering at people on the side of the road.

And so, I was out walking about 10 o'clock on a Friday night. And these two guys were standing on the street corner smoking. So I stopped and witnessed the both of them.

And they were interested. And I invited them to both come to this camp meeting. I told them I'd pay.

It was \$35 a piece. So, Sunday afternoon they loaded up with us and went off to this camp for a week. And I witnessed them all.

We had some good meetings. A lot of people getting saved. You know, people hollering and crying and laughing and falling down on the ground and getting saved.

My brother got scared. He ran. He got about 100 yards from the building and fell down in the leaves.

He got saved. Toward the end of the meeting there, a group of people got around one of these boys and started praying for him to get saved. He was the last hold out in the whole building.

Man, he started crying. He started begging God to save him. He started praying.

He thanked God for his salvation and all that. And we all rejoiced. And the next morning I couldn't find him.

And I looked and looked. Finally, about the middle of the morning, I found him. He said, What did you do to me? I said, What are you talking about? He said, You guys mesmerized me.

You mess with my mind. He's a queer today. He didn't get saved.

He just had an emotional experience. We brought it on with a lot of intense emotion around him and everything. He had an emotional experience.

And he went through the whole thing. And even, you know, what, 12 hours later, he was angry that we induced that in him, that experience. And he called it mesmerizing, hypnotizing his mind.

I continued to know the guy for the next three or four years. I wrestled with him, rode bicycles with him, witnessed to him. He never did.

He just always was totally resistant to the gospel. What kind of experience did you have? Don't tell me about how much you cried. Don't tell me about how much you shouted.

Don't tell me about how high you jumped. Tell me right now, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Is He first? Is He foremost? Is He the center of your life? Don't tell me you spoke in tongues. Don't tell me you cast out devils or performed miracles or done wonderful works.

Tell me, is the Lord Jesus Christ your all in all, or are you able to secretly sin? You can steal. You can lie. You can lust.

And go from one day to the next to the next to the next. And not tear at the Lord Jesus Christ living inside of you. You never repented towards God.

You're lost in your sins. I'll stop there. The ball's in your court now.

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