

Proverbs 24- Five Myths of Repentance

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of deep, heartfelt repentance in overcoming addiction and achieving true change.

Duration: 53:59

Scripture: Acts 3:19

Topics: "True Repentance", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine repentance, highlighting the distinction between sorrow and true repentance, the need to avoid self-defense and selective repentance, and the transformation that comes from a repentant heart. The speaker urges the congregation to embrace repentance as the key to experiencing hope, peace, and a deeper relationship with God.

Transcript

Lord, I would just pray tonight for the service. Heavenly Father, let this word go out and change lives. Lord, we want marriages to be restored.

We want broken relationships to be healed. For the prodigal to come home. Lord, please begin to work in this place.

I ask for healing, Lord, and deliverance from addictions and different things, Lord. Lord, we thank you for everything you've given us. We thank you for the blessing of life and for your son.

Lord, I pray that you just infuse my words tonight. And not have me say what I want to say, but Lord, what do you want to say? What do you want to say to us tonight as we look to your word? And we ask this in Jesus' name, amen. Proverbs 24.

And actually, this is an interesting sermon because I didn't get through Proverbs 23 at all. Many of you know I left off at verse 19. And then when I looked at 24, Proverbs 24, I felt the need to go back to 23 and cover what I didn't get a chance to cover.

And I worked on it Sunday and Monday and Tuesday. And Tuesday night we had to go to the hospital. But by the time Tuesday morning rolled around, I really was burdened to talk about this issue of repentance and what it looks like.

Because the more I pastor, the more I see that people sometimes confuse repentance with being sorry. Or repentance with doing better. And we kind of miss what biblical repentance is.

So I want to tie it into this message and where we left off in Proverbs 23. So we're going to actually go back to Proverbs 23, verse 20. And this is dealing with this issue of alcohol.

Verse 20. It says, Do not mix with winebibbers or with gluttons, eaters of meat. For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.

And the Bible is crystal clear on this. Drunkenness and gluttony are both condemned as destructive lifestyles. Both of those.

Gluttony, and we're all susceptible, myself included. It's when I get home from church and haven't eaten most of the day. And I can binge.

I can just eat two or three times more than I should. But he's talking about a lifestyle of gluttony. It's basically feeding the body more than it needs.

And then also paralleling with drunkenness. With alcohol. Drunkenness and gluttony.

And what have we taught on before? You'll see it in your notes. The flesh says, feed me so I can destroy you. That's what both of those areas.

Feed me more alcohol. Feed me more. You know what? You can fill in the blanks with this.

There's pills. There's weed. Marijuana.

Everything. Speed, cocaine, alcohol. You can fill in the blank with this addictive nature in this sermon.

So anything that begins to pull you down. Gluttony, we're feeding our body, and drugs, alcohol. The flesh is saying, feed me so I can destroy you.

So the next time we think, man, I need that hit, or I need that pill, or I need that drink, really it's the flesh saying, not the spirit. Because the spirit inside of us wants us to be filled with the spirit and go towards God and worship him. And I believe that at the core of, and if I had time I could unpack it, at the core of addiction is idolatry.

You're putting something where God needs to be. And that's what idolatry is. You're filling a need.

Something is taking place of where God is. Now, of course, we have to eat. So gluttony, you have to eat.

With alcohol, we know that moderation, it's fine. I've actually given a sermon on this a year and a half ago. Alcohol, and I titled it, Liberty Has Limits.

So if you're curious what our stance is, that's the whole message. It's on our website. If you put in, Liberty Has Limits.

And I talked about that, so I don't want to go through that here. But I will say it's pretty simple. Most people that don't have a problem with it know what moderation is.

They can have a little bit now and then. It's no big deal. It's those of us who try to find loopholes in the system that know that we really shouldn't be going down that road.

But we say, well, Timothy had, Paul told Timothy to have a little bit, and it's in moderation. But moderation is a glass, not two bottles. You know, where does it end here? So I think what we're seeing in our nation, what you'll see is alcoholism.

Why is it rising? Why are families being destroyed by it? Because it's a serpent that bites, and it stings, and the flesh says, feed me so I can destroy you. That first drink is not what the flesh wants us to have. The flesh wants us to get hooked and to be pulled astray.

Anything, anything the body gets addicted to is not healthy. And we can go down the list from caffeine to alcohol to drugs to anything that you have to have. I have to have it.

It's now controlling you. It becomes an addiction there. So what he's saying is watch these addictive lifestyles.

Verse 29, who has woe, and who has sorrow, and who has contentions, and who has complaints? Let's stop there. He's talking about alcohol. Who has woe? Who has problems, basically? The person who is addicted to wine or alcohol or beer or whatever it is and has too much, they have problems in life.

Who has woe and sorrow and contentions? Always arguing, always complaining. If you look at someone who drinks a lot, their household is not very pleasant. Somebody who's addicted to drugs, it's not a peaceful, hi, mom, hi, dad, hi, spouse, hi.

It's not a peaceful environment. The addiction has taken over, and there's woes and there's contentions and there's complaining all the time. It's a destructive lifestyle that is set out to kill the family.

Have you ever noticed that? That's why, oh, he's had a hard life. You ever hear that? From alcoholics mainly, too. And those addicted to drugs, they've had a hard life.

Why have they had a hard life? Because that addiction took over and brought them down. So the Bible is saying, listen, if you are addicted to this, you will have woe and sorrow and arguments and contentions all of your life because hard is the way of the transgressor. So the Bible warns us early on.

Who has wounds without cause? But the alcoholic has plenty of excuses, don't they? Who has redness of eyes without the signs of decay? The body is decaying. Those who linger long in wine, those who go in search of mixed wine, those are the people who have redness of eyes. Their body is showing signs of decay.

Verse 31, do not look, and this is critical. This is interesting what he's saying here. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly.

Some of us are just getting thirsty right there. Yeah, I mean, look at how that works. At the last, it bites like a serpent and it stings like a viper.

And this is so important because what, and I've talked about before, so I don't want to blabber the point, but sin looks good. That's the bait. He's saying, look at, it looks, don't just, oh, doesn't that look good? And you start to think about, of course it looks good.

If it didn't look good, we wouldn't take the bait. When you go fishing, do you think the bait looks good to the fish? Try just throwing out a hook by itself. Just a big old steel hook sometimes.

Just throw that out by itself. You rarely get anything unless a fish is swimming by and gets caught accidentally. So the bait looks good or we wouldn't take it.

So this applies to all areas. Don't look at that and contemplate and think about, oh, how that will make me feel. Doesn't the devil remind us of, man, how good that will feel? I'll relax.

He doesn't remind us of the hangover the next morning. He can't get out of bed. Nothing happens.

Don't show up for work. Lose your job. You're losing your family.

You're becoming disconnected with even your parents or friends. He doesn't show you that or show me that. He shows us the enticement.

Just another hit, just another pill, just another, if I could just, why doesn't he show us that other side? Think about that. If you could see where it's going, if you could see the hook underneath the bait, we wouldn't take the bite. But that's what the enemy does.

You always have to remember that he's always going to come at you, come at me through the lust of the flesh, what we're talking about, the lust of the eye or the pride of life. Those three, those each have a hook. The lust of the flesh, what our flesh craves, what our flesh goes after.

And the lust of the eyes, coveting. This whole housing market, this whole financial crumble that America's experiencing is because of the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. He used all three of those with us.

So you always have to remember that. Look at the bait and always remember that hook underneath. If you have a problem in these areas, if I can just, I'll just have one drink tonight, that doesn't work because one drink leads to seven or eight or nine.

And then you try old duels. You try this and try this and just get hooked and hooked. And what's going on? You've got to crucify that.

And don't look. He's saying, don't look at it. Don't look at its enticing appeal.

Romans 13, 14, make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. And I often say, and I used to say this too when I would teach on health and fitness, is out of sight, out of mind. If we have a problem with something, it's not good to put it in the refrigerator or up in the cupboard.

I don't have Reese's peanut butter cups at home or chocolate donuts. Why? Why? What about a nice cold six-pack in there? I'd probably do pretty good for a while, but one of these times, like, oh, that really looks good. Out of sight, out of mind.

You see how that works? And I always start there. If people want to lose weight and get in shape with their bodies, you better go through that pantry like a crazy man. Start pulling out the stuff that is not productive, not helping your body.

Redo everything. Because if you come home and you have healthy food, guess what you're going to eat? Healthy food. Or you'll hit an AI Burger on the way home.

I have a confession. I have a confession. I don't think I've eaten there in a few years, but when Morgan wanted it the next day in the hospital, right? I went.

And I said, I'm going to stop by and get something healthy. Oh, man. Have you ever eaten? The smell of that thing, the hamburgers right there and French fries.

Oh, my Lord. Wow, that just, man. But it was good.

It was good. And then you get hooked. You're like, I blew it white.

And then Pollo Loco for dinner. It's like, man, I can get back on track, back on track. But that's how that works.

That's just a little side note. That's not part of the sermon. Let you know that I understand that struggle with this type of food.

And it's, you know, that's a whole different sermon. When we talk on health and fitness, we'll talk about that. Verse 33, your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things.

He's saying when alcohol takes over, when drugs take over, it's not they might. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter, speak perverse things. When addiction is home, discernment takes a vacation.

When addiction is controlling you, when addiction is home, discernment takes a vacation. One or the other. Discernment is in your house here, or addiction is.

And these people, they're addicted to things. That pill, those pills, or that drink, or that whatever, you fill in the blank. That begins to move discernment out of the way.

Why is alcohol called spirits? And you start to act, that's not like them. They're acting a certain way. Why? Because they're filled with the spirits, that controlling element there.

That's why Paul says don't be filled or drunk with alcohol, but be filled with the Spirit of God. See the contrast there? You're either filled with this, probably a demonic influence, if you want to be really true to Scripture. This demonic influence, it's not of God.

When you give yourself over to alcohol, and it becomes an addiction, now you're consuming more than your body can handle. Now something else is controlling you. That's why you speak perverse things.

You ever say, oh, they're just drunk, don't worry about what they said. Well, what? They were intoxicated. That's why they said they see things.

Their discernment's not good. Get the load of guns out of the house. You just can't see, you can't focus.

Why? Because you're giving yourself over to that destructive influence. And right now, many people, even here or they'll hear this message later, there's excuses we still have. Yeah, but Shane, I need to relax at night.

Come on, buddy. What are the excuses? Yeah, but, yeah, but, yeah, but. God's Word doesn't have a lot of yeah, but's in there.

It says here's what it does, here's the destructive pattern, you need to make different choices, or this is what's going to happen. But we like to put the yeah, but's in there. Mine was, I'm German and Irish, that's what we drink.

I had a hard day at work, try doing what I do. Why does it never make anything better? It doesn't. It brings us to poverty.

Might make things better for an hour or two, but when that hour or two's over, then we've got the hell to pay afterwards. Now, what I want to do is get into the message of the title, Five Myths of Repentance. Five Myths of Repentance.

And the reason I did that is because a lot of people overcoming addiction, and whatever it is, one of the elements is repentance. Of course, accountability, there's a lot of different things. I've heard somebody say it didn't take them 12 steps, it took them one step from the front row to the altar to repent.

But I'm also not one of those guys who, well, that's all you need to do, that's all you need to do, because there's different dynamics that take place. You need accountability and you need things. But it often starts there.

Any change in your life has to start with this vital word, repentance. It's the first word of the Gospel. John the Baptist came on the scene saying, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And I believe that this is the problem that we're seeing a lot in the church today. That we forget about deep, heartfelt repentance. That's what changes a person.

Remember what I said last month about that African pastor? They asked him, why is there so much counseling in the American church, but not in the African church? What did he say? In America, you counsel. In Africa, we repent. And that's true.

Because what's happened is, and don't get me wrong, I counsel people. I counsel myself from time to time. But if that takes a place, it's never meant to take the place of repentance.

It's supposed to be supplementary. A supplement. You know how you take supplements, vitamins? That's all counseling should be, is a supplement to deep, heartfelt repentance.

It doesn't take the place of it. And what happens is, we go and we talk and we talk, and after talking so much, I feel so much better. You understand me now.

I've talked it through. I feel better. I'm good.

You're not good. No repentance took place. You just feel better because you talked about it.

Or I just talked it through. That's why a lot of marriage problems never get fixed either. Even if couples sometimes talk, well, we talked about it.

Yeah, but deep repentance didn't take place. That is the one thing what repentance does, is it breaks a human heart. It breaks it and opens us up to the work of God.

I remove excuses. I remove everything and say, Lord, I was wrong. Those are very healthy words that we don't like to say.

It's very healthy to say, I was wrong. I was wrong in this area. I admit it.

I was wrong. Well, yeah, but you did this and you did that and you forced me to do this and you should have said that and the guy at work, it's all these excuses. We actually leap around repentance as often as possible.

Somebody confronts, yeah, but, no buts. Repentance is what we're gonna talk about in the next 20 minutes. What it looks like, because I think a lot of people are confused.

This is why A.W. Tozer would often say, don't come up here and cry about it, go home and live it out. See, we can come up, people come up and cry about, oh, oh, oh, but no, repentance doesn't take place. That's why they're up at the altar all the time and nothing ever changes because repentance has not taken place.

So right before I talk about this, I wanna show a quick clip. If you guys, Bernie, can hit the videos. I think Chris can turn the volume up.

We actually got this testimony, I think, a year ago, but I've been kind of sitting on it for a little while just to make sure it's okay with them, of course, and to tie it into my message. I was drinking a lot. We weren't getting along very well.

We got in a pretty bad fight and it was one of the more, one of the worst fights that I think we've been in. We didn't get physical, but it got really bad. I left for 10 days and I had never done that before.

During that 10 days, I went to the coast and I stayed down there. I had to come back for work towards the end of the 10 days. I came back in eight days and I stayed in a trailer out back on our property and I still hadn't spoken to her.

When I did talk to her, when I came back at the eighth day, I told her that we were done to either get an attorney or a counselor. So that was the beginning and that was the big turn in my life when all these signs started happening, different things in our lives. That's when we got hooked up with this church.

We started coming to the church. There's a lot of little things that, I can't, we'd be here for an hour if I went into all the details of all the things that happened in our lives. But God did show us some signs and we went through a whole regimen of things, things at work, things in our lives.

We've fallen in love all over again. It's awesome. We're far from perfect, but we're still striving to be on the right path, the narrow path.

It's not easy, but it's very rewarding. Our lives are being changed. The people around us have noticed.

We were pretty, I guess you could say, ruffians. We've done a lot of changing over this last six months. And with the alcohol, that's another, just another little miracle that I've quit drinking before.

The last time I quit drinking, I always desired to have more alcohol, but that was gone. That is gone this time. We can go to the restaurant and the guys at the table there can be having a beer and I don't look at it and think I want one of those.

That's amazing to Stacey and I, the way that that's happened. I mean, God just orchestrated everything. It's like He just said, He waited.

It was just like He waited for that opportune moment that we asked Him. And even though we were in two different places and even our mindset was in two different places, we both were asking God for the same thing and He totally orchestrated our lives. He put us with the right counselor.

He brought us to the right church that was starting a marriage series that was spirit-filled. We ran into people within a two-day period that we had counseled with before when we were seeking God and just the people that we got in contact with. God just really orchestrated every point of our life so that there was no way we could deny that God was directing us to move towards Him, that He was the answer to save our marriage.

If you get a chance, you should talk to Ron Stacey afterwards. Her testimony is pretty powerful. And in case I forget, this is only about three minutes long.

I had to go through and pick just the highlights. But if you go on our website and you click on this video on Vimeo, next to it's going to be the whole testimony. It's about 13 minutes long.

Talk about, I mean, they're heading to divorce court getting counselor or lawyer, attorneys, we want this over. And he was drinking a lot and the whole thing. So I wanted to kind of allow them to give a quick testimony of how God radically changed that around.

And really the key word, and Ron, you probably agree, was repentance. And Stacey, until you actually repent, it's not going to happen. So what I pulled from is Richard Owen Roberts' book on repentance, the first word of the gospel.

If you guys want more on the subject, I highly encourage this book. I'm going to say it again. Repentance, the first word of the gospel.

And what I'm going to do now is springboard off of chapter 24 Proverbs where they say, If you say, Surely we did not know this, does not he who weighs the heart consider it? And he who keeps your soul, does he not know it? And will he not render to each man according to his deeds? So in chapter 24, he's saying, Listen, God knows our hearts. A lot of times we come to church, we've had everybody fooled, so we think we've got God fooled too. He knows our hearts better than we do.

So there's no more fooling, there's no more games to play. It should be, Okay, Lord, you know me, speak to me, show me, let my heart break before you. And God will not render to each man according to his deeds? Yes, he will.

Paul declares in Acts 26 to everyone, You should repent and turn to God and perform deeds appropriate to repentance. You guys remember John the Baptist when he came on the scene and the religious leaders were coming to him? And he said, You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath that is to come? Therefore, if you are truly repenting, bear fruit worthy of repentance. So what are those five things? Well, I'm glad you asked.

I'm gonna talk about them right now. Five myths, I knew that was gonna be harder for me. To repentance.

Well, you see it in your bulletin, that's the title. Number one, sorrow equals repentance. Sorrow equals repentance.

Eh, not true. Not true. Remember, remind you of that family feud noise? So I'm gonna do that after each one to get your attention.

Sorrow equals repentance. Eh, not true. Here's why.

Most people are sorry. Why are they sorry? Sorry I got caught. Oh, my wife found out.

My spouse found out. I'm sorry I got caught. It'll never happen again.

Sorry my reputation now is on the line. Of course we're sorry. I've lost my job.

I was just this pillar in the community. A pastor now falls from grace. Now they're weeping and crying.

Is there true change? You guys remember when Ted Haggard fell, right? From Colorado many years ago, five, six years ago. And it's public knowledge, so I think I can say it. I know one of the guys who was on his accountability, but he just walked away from accountability after a year.

I'm done with him, good. Or even shorter than that, really? What was that all about? Genuine sorrow does result in repentance. So here's where we have to be careful.

But just because people are crying or sorry doesn't mean they're repentant. This is why you'll hear often, I'll never do that again. And what do they do? Now, of course, there's a fine line here because we struggle and we fall forward and we're not perfect.

And I've got all that. But somebody who is genuinely repentant, their sorrow will be backed up by godly actions. They don't make many more excuses for their actions.

They take full responsibility. That's why Tozer would say, don't come up here and cry about it. Go home and live it out.

And I used to see this a lot at men's conferences. They would come up and just cry and weep and this. It's because their life is falling apart.

They're looking like bozos at work. Now everybody knows. Their sin's been known.

They're so sorry they're crying. But they're not repentant. There's not that brokenness of heart that's actually going to create change.

And then what happens? They cry for a while. They have a good weekend and then they go back and nothing changes. They get in that old destructive lifestyle again.

So sorrow does not equal repentance. However, tears can be good. You see how this works? They're just not the indicator in and of themselves.

So if somebody is sorry, it doesn't mean they're necessarily repentant. I really want to get that point across because often sometimes we'll counsel couples even sometimes and let's say there's been a big breakup and one of the spouses is usually primarily a man. He's so sorry that he did that.

Okay, should I let him right back in? Well, what I usually say is give it some time. However destructive they were, give it some time because they might be saying the right thing and being sorry, but they have not truly repented. So time will tell.

You've got to give it time to see if that heart has been truly broken. Number two, repentance and self-defense can exist together. Repentance and self-defense cannot live in the same house.

You know what I'm talking about? Repentance is over here saying, I'm sorry, I repent. But over here I'm saying, but, but you do this, you do that. You don't cook, you don't clean, you don't do this, you don't do that.

But, but, but, but, but, sure I'm repentant, but I'm also defending myself. I do this because this, you push me all the time in this and I was raised this way and my dad was never nice to me. But yeah, okay, I'm repentant, but I'm also defending myself.

They can't live together. A truly repentant person will take full responsibility, remove excuses and say, I was wrong, I'm going to fix this by the grace of God. They don't sit there and defend themselves.

So if we're repenting and the word but, but, but comes up a lot, that's not repentance, that's self-defense. But we'll give kudos to repentance because we don't want to look really bad. We want people to know I somewhat feel sorry for it.

But I'm not going to truly repent, I'm going to continue to defend myself. And you see this, I mean, I'm guilty of this too. People call us on certain things, yeah, but, this, but, well, no, no, no.

Either you're wrong or you're right. There's not a middle ground there. Now, of course, this isn't a paintbrush where I'm painting every situation.

I know all of your situations. This is a big, big stroke. I'm just saying more than not, you cannot defend yourself and be repentant.

Be broken and humble before God. Those cannot coexist. This is why Jesus would often say, your sins are forgiven you.

You say, well, Shane, what are you talking about? Well, hold on, let me back up a little bit. Often, Jesus would come, you know, the woman who met Him and wiped her tears off of His feet with her hair and all these things. She didn't say a word.

And He says, daughter, your sins are forgiven you. The Pharisees were disgusted. What's He talking about? How can a man forgive sins? Or the other man that was let down.

Your sins are forgiven you. Where's the little prayer that we've all learned? They didn't say the sinner's prayer. You don't have to say the sinner's prayer when your heart breaks.

You see that? Now, am I against this? Of course not. But there's a lot of people who say the sinner's prayer who have not repented. And we're leading an entire generation of people in the wrong direction just because they've said a prayer but they never repent and their hearts never change and accept Christ.

You could get me a whole room of young adults and I could paint a terrible picture of hell and you don't want to go there and just raise your hand and pray after me if you don't want to go there and you'll be

good. I could get half the room to raise their hand. How many of those people have truly changed? How many of those people have truly changed? Why? Because it's got to happen in here.

Just read through the Bible. Jesus said, Your sins are forgiven, daughter. You're forgiven.

She didn't say anything. You don't have to say anything. It's your heart breaking inside.

You're saying something theoretically from the inside out. So there's a lot of people that come up and I've done it before and I've changed my approach a little bit on altar calls. Even though I think they can be biblical.

I love Billy Graham, Greg Laurie and I have high respect for those men. But you've got to tell people what they're doing. You've got to say, Listen, you're repenting and turning from your sin and turning to God.

Because I've had people come up and they've cried, they're ready. I'll say, Listen, you want to accept Christ as your Lord and Savior and give your whole life to God right now? I don't know if I'm ready for that. What are you ready for? I'm going through a tough spot right now.

We're sensitive to that. But what about if I would say, Well, that's okay. Let me pray for you.

I'm interceding like Mary, co-redeemer. There's no such thing there. So that's why I want to be very careful when people say a sinner's prayer because it's not the sinner's prayer that gets them into heaven.

It's the condition of the heart. Now, often that prayer will lead to repentance. Both can be good, but it can't be.

Repentance is actually more important because that's what takes place. There's people that come in here unconverted and they leave converted and I can see in their seat they're breaking, they're weeping. God is dealing with them right now.

They're giving their heart to the Lord. They're surrendering everything right now. They didn't say a word.

Nobody knows. You see how that works? So just be very careful on this whole issue because we want to hurry. Just say this prayer with me.

Okay. We almost force it. People feel forced into it.

Well, yeah, okay. I'll try Jesus out. I'll get out of jail free card.

You don't try anything out when you repent. Sinful man says, Lord, I need you. I'm giving my life to you tonight.

I repent of my sin. Take me. Again, it's not about perfection, but direction.

Direction of the heart. When I say it's not about perfection, it's about direction, I'm encouraging you, number one, because I don't want anybody leaving here thinking that Shane's got it all down. We should never make any mistakes.

You're going to make mistakes, but you fall into God's arms of forgiveness and restoration. You repent. And if I can be honest with you, I repent quite often.

Uh-oh. Uh-oh. I'm getting some looks.

I don't repent for salvation. I repent because I'm a prideful man working on humility by the grace of God, and you have to repent every morning. Why? Because sin comes back up, rears its ugly head, and wants to dominate, and you repent.

Say, Lord, I was wrong. I want to be a better husband. I want to be a better father.

I want to be a better leader. I want to be a better teacher. I want to be a better mom.

I want to be a better wife. Lord, I repent of those destructive, because what repentance does, it keeps you in a very healthy relationship with God. I'm repenting of these things.

I'm removing them. Lord, I need you. Believe it or not, I repent every morning.

Every morning, that's how I open my day and my prayers, and that's why these sermons come from a prayer closet sometimes stained with tears from repentance and God breaking me. As soon as I get in there and think I've got this down, I'm going to put this together, I'm in trouble. And I will tell you right now, as God is my witness, you'll see the article in the paper.

It's going to upset a lot of pastors because now it's been caught up by some other major websites and it's going to ruffle some feathers, but that's okay. A lot of pastors want to avoid this word repentance because people don't like to hear it. We want to build large auditoriums and big audiences.

Why? Because we have a church idol. Just like American Idol, it's in the church. I want to build a big ministry, get a big name.

I want this mega audience and I'm just going to tell everybody what they want to hear. And that's not biblical. Because see, in my sinful fallen state, I want to do that.

Why? Because I don't want to be disliked. Remember how I talk about what the truth costs my family? Using a P.O. box, buying a house under a trust, my little kids hiding the newspaper so my wife doesn't see negative editorials, emails coming, raising, why does everybody hate my daddy? You think we like that? Not everybody. There's a lot of good.

The good far outweighs the bad. But I've realized, what are these people getting upset at? This word. This word.

Sin, repentance, judgment, Lord, and Savior. They don't want to hear that word. I can talk about anything but those four words.

If I talked about God's love, and His grace, and His mercy, thank God for that though. You've heard me say that before. It's grace that's brought me here thus far, and it's grace that will take me home.

Amazing grace. I was blind, but now I see. Thank God for it.

But true grace cannot be understood without true repentance. And true grace cannot be embraced without genuine repentance. They are married never to be separated.

So that's the distinction. That's the difference. And I'm so thankful for you guys and the emails we get saying, oh Shane, you're this, and you're anointed by God, and my message is, no, it's not in me.

If it was me, it would be sinful man up here telling you what you want to hear. It's God. Give Him all the credit.

Give Him all the glory. If you could see my heart the way I think, it's no different from yours. Don't look to me.

Look to that. Look to the cross. Look to Christ.

All I've done is submitted and then allow God to fill me. And so basically, what you're hearing, what you're seeing, is Him using a broken, empty, prideful vessel who said, Lord, take me. Dio Mudi was once asked of Dio Mudi.

Somebody once said to him before he started his ministry, that the world has yet to see what God will do with a man or woman fully surrendered to Him. That's what God's looking for, is fully surrendered hearts. The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to Him.

That's why you have to have daily repentance, not for salvation, but for sanctification. Because that's what repentance does. It cleans the heart out.

I think of it as a spiritual shower. We take physical showers, get all this off of me, but what about what's growing on in the heart? Bitterness and resentment and all this stuff. I've got to let it go.

Lord, I've got to let that go and let that go and do this and treat this person better. Let it go. That's what repentance is.

So now that we know it's not sorrow and tears, now that we know it's not making excuses, self-preservation is not repentance as well. And that's foxhole religion. Or you've seen it before.

Somebody accepts God real quick and then, oh, I just needed Him for a little while. I don't want all of God. So they take on a form of repentance, but that's only to preserve themselves.

Somebody who is genuinely repentant. Let me read what I put here. When repentance is genuine, we want to be reconciled with those we injured.

Listen, that's a very important point. When you are truly repentant, you want to be reconciled with those you've injured. You don't want to fight against them and argue against them and you're not bitter and angry and upset.

You want to be reconciled because your heart is truly repentant. It has to be. We seek forgiveness without conditions and stipulations.

Somebody who's truly repentant, will you forgive me for doing that to you? Will you forgive me? We don't put all these stipulations on it. Yeah, but you better change and you better work on this and I better not see that again. You better not do that again.

That's not repentance. All that is is your lip service. You see how repentance is so crucial? It's the first word of the gospel.

We forget it. It's the first word of the gospel. Throughout the entire New Testament, God is calling His people back to Him through repentance.

Malachi, God takes a 400 year break in church history, recorded history. Then John the Baptist comes on the scene saying repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus came and what did He do? He went everywhere sending out disciples saying preach repentance for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Peter, his first recorded sermon, cuts right to the heart and says you have crucified the Son of God. What must we do to be saved? What did Peter say? Repent. Repent.

Paul comes on the scene. What's he saying? You see in the theme here? Repentance. That is a word to change your marriage.

You don't need seven steps to this or 16 steps to this or this or this or a lot of counseling, a lot of therapy. You need deep and heartfelt repentance because what that does is it opens the heart like heart surgery and now God can go in and work. Without that, the heart stays hard as stone.

We can come to church. We can play church. We can even read our Bible.

But until repentance takes place, say Lord you do heart surgery. You get in there and you change my heart. It will not happen on its own.

That's why somebody I can see, I saw them 10 years ago, they've not changed in 10 years. Actually they've become more bitter, more hard. But they go to church and they're proud about it.

Why has nothing changed there? No repentance. Why? They don't think they need to. So pride comes in.

That's your greatest enemy. The greatest enemy of repentance is pride. Because you know what we say? I'm not going to do that.

No way. They're right. They're wrong.

I'm right. Would that not prevent repentance? I'm not going to go repent. I'm not going to break.

They're wrong. I'm right. They're wrong.

I'm right. Really? Usually I've discovered that the truth is somewhere right in the middle. And often both parties need to repent.

I have very rarely seen a marriage restored in which both parties do not repent or get healed. Both have to repent and give the situation over to God. And then that's when God can work.

Now He will move on behalf of one person often. But often it's going to take those two people to break again and come back together. I know I beat this subject up a lot, but I'm contending for marriage in our culture today because the enemy is coming after it like never before.

I mean, it's alarming what's going on. And I see it so much. Number four, repentance can be selective.

Repentance cannot be selective. What does that mean? I'll repent. A husband says, I'll repent for my porn habit, but I'm not going to repent over my anger.

I'm not going to repent over this and that. I'll give you that, but I'm not going to give you all this. Repentance is not selective.

Repentance encompasses everything. I say, Lord, I'm wrong in all these areas. Because as soon as you hold on to one little thing, we call that a stronghold.

I'm not going to let that go. That becomes a stronghold that the enemy uses. Casting down arguments and every thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ, bringing every thought captive, breaking strongholds of the enemy.

Paul talks about to the Ephesian church. It can't be selective. So you see where all this is going? Repentance is very simple.

It's a humble, broken man or woman admitting that they are wrong. There's no excuses. There's no buts.

There's no yeah, yeah, but, but. There's no tears because of ruined reputation. There's tears because a heart is breaking for their sin and their condition.

It's actually very simple, but we make it very complex because we want to put our little twist on things. Nobody ever wants to give God everything. Everything, everything, everything.

Your money, your 401k, your retirement, your choices, your media, your everything. You want to give him everything? No, I want to keep this. There's heck no.

How do I know? Because I struggle with it too. I can't give that amount of money. God's not going to see me through.

I'm convicted too to give to organizations and some of these groups helping, you know, fight against abortion and different things, and God puts it on my heart. I'm like, oh God, you know my bills? I can't do that. So we don't give him all of our areas of life.

The final thing, number five, reformation is repentance. And what I mean by that, you know what reformation is? It's a person that's changed. They're better.

You've seen it, I've seen it. They're better. But they're usually better for a season.

And what they do in that season is they watch until what they wanted is given back to them. Now the reformation period's over. Back to marriage again.

We see a lot of spouses sometimes separate. The one says, I've changed. Really, I have.

And why do they say it? Because they don't like living in a hotel. They don't like not seeing their kids. They don't like to have stopped fast food every night.

So I've changed. I've really changed, haven't I? Can't you tell? Come and open the door back in. What happened? Nothing's changed because they put on a mask for a while.

So repentance is not temporary reformation. It's a choice that influences your entire lifestyle. That's what repentance is in a nutshell.

I'm going to close with this. Again, I'm quoting Tozer a lot because I love some of his stuff. And if you guys want to, just grab any book from Tozer.

Anything will get you into that deeper thought about God. But he sums it up well. He says it's change, not time, that turns fools into wise men and sinners into saints.

I'll say that again. It's change, not time, that turns fools into wise men and sinners into saints. Because a lot of times we think, if I can just give it enough time, you can go their whole lifetime and never change.

It's change. What kind of change? From a repentant heart that tilts the scale in that direction. So Chelsea's going to come back up and she's just going to conclude with a song.

But I want to also offer hope on this closing point because one of the beautiful things about repentance is, guess what? It sounds difficult, right? But the beauty of repentance, the fruit of repentance, once you plant that seed of repentance, guess what comes up? Hope and joy and peace with God. So yes, it's difficult. Yes, a lot of people don't like what I'm saying.

But the byproduct of genuine repentance is hope and peace and right relationship with God. So I'm talking to two groups right now. Those who truly don't know Him.

Those who truly don't know Him. Usually it's those texting people wanting to get out of here, to be honest with you. Those who truly don't know Him, you need to repent.

You don't need to necessarily raise your hand or say a quick little prayer. Your heart needs a break tonight. Or those who've drifted away and this message is tugging your heart as well, you need to repent and turn back to God.

And Peter talks about times of refreshing coming from the presence of the Lord. Do you ever come in here and say, what is Shane talking about? I don't feel that spiritual life. I'm not filled with the Spirit of God like that.

I want that passion. I want more. Here's the secret.

Here's the key that unlocks that door. Repentance. Say, Lord, I break tonight.

I give you all of my heart tonight. I'm going to do something a little bit different. We're not going to go into a time of prayer right now.

I just want you guys to worship and help with this last song and think about your blessed Redeemer. Think about the cross. Think about what He's done.

Let the lyrics of this song stand out and sink and foster repentance in your own heart. And then I'll come back up and conclude. I often joke, and you guys have heard me say it before, and I'll be completely honest with you tonight.

The hardest part of pastoring, I mean, sometimes it really chokes me up. It's not the difficult counseling appointments. It's not the sermon preparation.

It's not funerals. It's not the lows. The hardest part of pastoring that weighs on my heart more than anything else is when I see many of you thirsty for living water.

It's just a step away. I carry that burden. I see you're thirsting for more.

You want more of God. You're desperate for more. It's like seeing somebody dying of spiritual dehydration.

They can just take the living water that Christ spoke about. It's right there, but they will not do it, and I don't know why. During worship, we should be in here praising God, broken, on the altar, giving Him glory and credit for everything, not looking at our clock and texting and wondering how quick it's going to get over.

All that shows is the condition of the heart. That's the hardest thing for me to pastor is to see people dying spiritually. Spiritual dehydration in the water is right there.

It's like the cup is right there. I can see it. I can see the cup of water.

It's right there, but they're dying spiritually. They're withering. They're falling.

They're faltering. They're dying. They don't know anything I'm talking about.

When Jesus says, Out of the abundance of your heart, if you believe on Me as the Scriptures say, out of your belly will flow rivers of living water. Where's these rivers of living water? This isn't boredom. Jesus isn't talking about being bored and barely getting through and dying spiritually.

He's talking about take of this and drink. My yoke is easy. My burden is light.

What will it take? I feel like, Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. I would that you would come to Me. I would.

Christ would say with tears in His eyes, Come, turn to Me. Take the water, the only water that you will never thirst again. Just take.

But you were not willing. That's it. That's the hardest part for me.

Because just taking a drink of the cup that Christ offers, which is brokenness and repentance and full surrender and then finally submitting and giving your entire life, everything changes. And I see so many people come in here just barely getting by, dying on the vine spiritually when just living water is right there, right there, and they cannot grab it. And I know what it is.

Because it happened to me. It's pride of heart. It's pride of heart.

That will be your greatest enemy until the day you die. It's pride of heart. I don't need that water.

That's for fanatical. That's for extreme. I've made it.

I've arrived. I've been a Christian all my life. I don't need that.

Oh, yes, you do, sir. You need that now more today than ever before. That's the hardest part of my job, to be honest with you, is to see people dying spiritually week in and week out.

And there's nothing I can do. I preach my heart out. I prepare.

I pray up. I say, Lord, bring revival. Bring revival to this church.

You remember what I believe God put in my spirit a year and a half ago? He said, Shane, you guys don't want revival. It will ruin your schedule. It will ruin your dignity.

Men will be weeping. Women will be travailing over the condition of their soul. Young adults will be crying.

Worship will have to cease. I won't even be able to preach because of the own emotions, the emotions flowing out of my tears. When God brings revival, you don't want it.

You don't want it because we're comfortable now. We've got God in a box. We don't want revival.

And you know what? He's absolutely correct. He's absolutely correct. We've got to get out of here on time.

We've got things to do. We don't want more of it, all right? So we wonder why we're dying on the vine. That's why.

That's what burdens me. That's what puts the pressure on me, is just seeing the people dying spiritually. So I would just encourage you, look at your hearts tonight and say, Lord, is this a challenge to me? If it is, and I beg you, I beg you, turn.

The fully surrendered life is the only life that a Christian should know. It shouldn't be divorced of that.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/luZf1a8MPSI.mp4>

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