

What Is Repentance?

by Tom Garner

Repentance is a necessary and ongoing process of turning from our sin nature and seeking God, which is essential for revival and spiritual growth.

Scripture: Nehemiah 9:3, Acts 20:32, Ephesians 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 Peter 5:2

Topics: "Church Unity", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

The preacher emphasizes the importance of equipping the saints, using the Greek word 'katartismos' which means to make something or someone completely adequate or sufficient for a purpose. This involves mending, repairing, and making whole, similar to setting bones or mending nets. Paul calls for unity and completeness in the church, urging believers to be made complete in the same mind and judgment. The responsibility of church leaders is to equip the saints by using God's Word, ensuring they are fully prepared for every good work.

Transcript

It is a sorry state of affairs because many today leave this word, "repentance" out of their teachings and their preaching. This word is often overlooked and is not used for fear it would drive away the seeker. This word seeker, or seeker friendly is a buzz word for today. Let us digress for a moment and give a quick look at the meaning and the misuse of the word, "seeker."

What is a seeker?

What and how do we handle seekers?

Many today will not even mention contrition, judgement, consequences of sin, repentance or hell for fear of driving off the seeker. So then what is a seeker? Lets look at the definition: "someone making a search or inquiry, 'they are seekers after truth'". If they are "seekers", then God is dealing with them. For Scriptures states "that man in himself will not seek God." This is a truth that is not popular today, and there are those who say, that this is a lie, yet what God says is true. One can not come seeking God unless he is drawn by the Father.

So how do we handle seekers? We present them with the Truth. If God is sending them to us then we MUST present to them the absolute truth, not watered down, not sweet coated. They must have the word presented to them so that The Holy Spirit can then complete the reconciliation of the seeker to God. Within

this process there is a sorrow of sin, an understanding of a Holy God and one's horrid sinful self, which is mired in sin. We must be like Isaiah and cry out: "Woe to me! I cried, I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." Isaiah 6:5. Like Isaiah, repentance of sin is necessary for the cleansing.

There are even those today who say (and some of these are well known and respected teachers and preachers) that repentance is a work of man and has nothing to do with the salvation experience. Without sounding harsh, this teaching goes totally against the Word of God. "Repentance" is one of the major starting points for revival. We must then be crystal clear on what repentance is and what it is not.

Repentance is just what 2 Chronicles 7:14 states:"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their evil ways". This brings up a good point, if we are to turn from our evil ways, we must then know what our evil ways are. How are we to know what our evil ways are? Is not God's ten commandments a good place to start? The ten commandments are a gauge if you will, for us to know where we are in relationship to God. Because of time and space I will not review these on a one on one basis, but I ask you to read through each his commandments and ask yourself am I guilty.

When we speak of repentance many are confused because they do not understand nor do they comprehend what repentance is:

Repentance is not:

Penance: paying a price for your sin.

Grief: shedding tears for your sin.

Confession: confessing your sin is not repentance.

Then what is repentance? There are many marks that are indicators of true repentance, we will deal with only three.

Repentance is not a single act, but an ongoing (commitment or attitude) way of life. There are two elements so closely entwined they cannot be separated. Faith and repentance. I turn from my wicked ways and with faith turn to Christ.

This is not something once done, forever accomplished. Genuine repentance is ongoing, to use a phrase: " I am to be a repentant repentor"

We must then distinguish between repentance of the fruits of sin, and repentance of the roots of sin. What are the fruits and what are the roots? If you were to read the book of Jude we would see that there are three basic roots:

Unbelief

Pride

Stubbornness

As recorded in Psalms 51, David states that it was against God that he has sinned. We know that David's sin was with Bathsheba, against Uriah, against his family and even his own body, but these were the fruits of his sin. They were not the roots of his sin. David understood the difference. David knew that the root was not what he did, but it was what he was, David knew he was a sinner. David repented of his sin nature as well as repenting of his sin.

Is it then possible to repent of the fruit and not repent of the roots? YES. When one is caught in the sin, one can feel remorse for his sin, but not repent of the root. For if we repent of what we do, and never repent of who we are, this is not complete repentance. We must repent of who we are, a sinner and then repent of what we have done.

We must state that we hate what we are by nature, a sinner, and say "I hate what I am, a sinner, and that I hate what I do, which is sin. By faith I turn from what I am, and what I do and turn to Christ for forgiveness.

There are two distinguishable types of repentance: "Legal (Ego) Repentance and Evangelical Repentance." What are the differences?

Legal (Ego) Repentance: What is done for man.

Evangelical Repentance: What is done for God.

How can we define these two even more closely?

Ego repentance:

If we come to Christ because we are burdened by our sin, and we come to him for relief, then it is "Ego" repentance. How many times have we at the end of our messages ended with; "If you come to Christ, he will lift that burden of sin from your shoulders"? How far will they come? Only as far as they need to, to get relief.

If we come to Christ just because we do not want to go the Hell, then it is "Ego" repentance. How many times have we at the end of our messages ended with; "If you come to Christ, he will give to you everlasting life"? How close will they come to Christ? Only as far as they need to.

If we come to Christ because we have no friend and because there is one we can turn to, then it is "Ego" repentance. How many times have we at the end of our messages ended with; "There are those today that need a friend, and "there is none like the friend, Jesus" How close will they come to Jesus? Only as far as they need to, to feel loved.

Evangelical repentance:

If we come to Christ because of who he is. If we come to Christ because of what he has done to ransom us from our sin. If we come to Christ because of his excellencies, and because he deserves our worship and praise. Then how far will we come? We can never come close enough. Christ deserves our praise, our worship and he deserves to be Lord of our lives. This is evangelical repentance. It is for him that we repent, we do it for him not for what we can get out of him.

So to review:

Repentance is not a single act, but a lifestyle. Not once done forever accomplished

We must deal with the roots of our sin nature, and only then can we deal with the fruits.

Legal repentance deals with what we can get from Him, Evangelical Repentance is our repentance based on Him, for we see Him as he is, what he has done, and what He has accomplished and we then see ourselves as we are (just like Isaiah.) He is worthy of our humbling ourselves before Him.

"This is the great truth revival must emphasize. Without repentance, the Body of Christ is doomed to limp when it was designed to fly, to drag when it was called to draw, to drift when it should set its sails to catch every wind of the Spirit of God." --from Richard Owen Roberts' book Revival.

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