**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Repentance**

In previous lessons we have talked about the fact that salvation from sin is conditional. In other words there are conditions that man must meet in order for him to be saved from his sins. Among these conditions is repentance. Repenting of sin is essential for salvation from sin. When Jesus gave the great commission to His apostles after His death, burial and resurrection, He said, *“Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”* (Luke 24:46-47) The apostles fulfilled that commission. They preached repentance. On the day of Pentecost Peter said to believing Jews, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* In Acts 3:19 Peter again told the Jews, *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”* Paul said to the idolaters in Athens, *"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”* (Acts 17:30). Rom. 3:23 says that *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* Since sin is universally prevalent, it makes repentance universally necessary. No one will go to heaven without repenting of sin. Since repentance is essential it is important that we know what it is and how to do it. This is the focus of our lesson today.

The word “repent” means “to change one’s mind or purpose.” To repent of sin is to turn the mind away from sin and toward God. It is the decision to stop serving sin and to start serving God. Paul said that after his conversion he *“was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”* (Acts 26:19-20). Repentance then involves a turning to God.

Now, this repentance is preceded by godly sorrow. 2 Cor. 7:10 says, *“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted…”* “Godly sorrow” is a sorrow that has God in it. It is a sorrow that comes from the recognition that I have sinned against God; I have grieved God by my sins; I am separated from God because of my sins. This godly sorrow produces repentance, a repentance that involves a turning away from sin and to God.

And this repentance results in a change of behavior. Again in Acts 26:20, Paul says that he declared *“that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”* “Works befitting repentance” is the change in one’s behavior that results from repentance. In other words when a liar and a thief repents and turns to God then he will stop lying and stealing. When John the Baptist *“saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.”* (Matt. 3:7-8). “Fruits worthy of repentance” are the changes in one’s life that are the results of repentance.

And so, repentance is a turning of the mind away from sin to God. It is preceded by godly sorrow and results in a reformation of one’s manner of life. This is essential to salvation.

To get a better understanding of what repentance is and to rid our minds of some misconceptions let’s talk about what repentance is not.

First of all, repentance is not just the promise to quit sin. One may say, “I promise to quit sin,” but with no genuine change of heart. A liar may promise to quit lying, but does not quit lying. A drunkard may promise to quit drinking, but does not quit his drinking and drunkenness. Repentance is a genuine change of the heart that results in real change of one’s behavior.

Secondly, repentance is not just the conviction of sin. It is not just admitting you are in sin. Now, the admission of sin is essential for repentance to take place, but the conviction or admission of sin in one’s life is not the same as repenting from those sins. In Acts 2:36 Peter concludes his sermon to the Jews by saying, *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."* Notice the effect his sermon had on many of the Jews. The text says, *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”* The fact they were “cut to the heart” indicates that they are now convicted of their sin of crucifying the Messiah, and they want to know what to do. Peter tells them to repent and each of them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (v. 38). But notice, they were convicted of their sins, but Peter went on to tell them they needed to repent. And so the conviction of sin is not the same as repentance.

Thirdly, repentance is not just turning away from two or three sins. Here is a liar, thief, fornicator and drunkard. He says, “I repent. I will give up my lying, my stealing, my fornicating, but you can’t expect me to give up my drinking.” This one has not repented toward God. One who repents and turns to God will put away ALL sins. James says in James 1:21, *“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”* ALL filthiness must be laid aside. You know, God’s nature is such that one cannot turn to God and bring sinful practices of his old life with him. You see, God is holy, meaning He is completely separate from all sin. God will not and cannot have fellowship with sin. He will not and cannot condone or tolerate sin. Psalm 5:4 says, *“For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil dwell with You.”* Therefore, He cannot accept one who comes to Him holding on to sinful practices. Repenting and turning to God means we decide to put away ALL sin.

Fourthly, repentance is not just being sorrowful for sin. 2 Cor. 7:10 says, *“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”* Notice that godly sorrow produces repentance. Sorrow for sin is not the same as repentance, but it produces repentance.

And also one may be sorrowful for what he has done, but it may not produce a repentance that involves a turning to God. Notice that Paul mentions two different kinds of sorrow in this passage – godly sorrow and sorrow of the world. Godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, and sorrow of the world produces death. We have already mentioned that godly sorrow is a sorrow that has God in it. It is a sorrow that comes from the recognition that we have sinned against God. This sorrow produces repentance that involves a turning to God. This repentance leads to salvation. But what is sorrow of the world? Sorrow of the world is a sorrow that is worldly based. Sorrow of the world is a sorrow that results from the loss, or ruin or sickness in this life caused by one’s sin. For example, a man robs a bank. He is caught and is sentenced to prison for ten years. He is sorrowful for what he has done, but it is because he got caught and is in prison. This is sorrow of the world. A drunkard is sorrowful, but it is because his drinking has destroyed his health and his family life. This is sorrow that results from the ill effects of sin in this life. Now, this sorrow of the world may even lead one to quit his sinful practice, but it is only because he wants a better life here in this world. This sorrow will not lead him to repent and turn to God. The only sorrow that will produce a repentance that is unto salvation is godly sorrow.

Fifthly, repentance is not simply a reformed life. A person may quit committing sexual immorality because he is afraid of sexually transmitted diseases. A person may quit gambling because he is losing too much money. But at the same time these people do not know God. Remember, repentance which is unto salvation involves and turning to God. The change of mind is toward God. The desire now is to please God. And when a person does this, it will result in a change of behavior, but it will be to please God and not just make his life a better place here.

Sixthly, repentance is not the covering or hiding of sin. Some seem to think if no one knows about my sin then I don’t have to worry about it. Just because sin is concealed from the eyes and mind of man, does not mean it is concealed from the mind of God. No one else may know what I have done, but God does. Sin is covered only when it is forgiven by God. And it is not forgiven until we repent and turn to Him. Proverbs 28:13 says, *“He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”* To be forgiven of sin we must repent of our sins.

What we have learned is that repentance is not just the promise to quit sin. It is not just the conviction of sin. It is not just being sorrowful for sin. Rather it is a genuine change of heart that involves a turning to God. Repenting of sin is not just the turning away from sin, but it is turning from sin to God. It is preceded by godly sorrow and results in a changed life, a life of service to God. It is not just turning away from a few sins, but turning away from all sins so one can be pleasing to God.

And we have learned that this repentance is necessary for salvation (Acts 3:19). Faith without repentance will not save. A person may believe in Jesus, but if he does not repent of his sins he cannot be saved. In John 12:42-43 we read of some rulers who believed in Jesus. It says, *“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”* They believed in Jesus, but they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. They had not turned their hearts to God. They did not have a penitent heart. A person that believes in Jesus, but then does what he wants to do rather than what Jesus would have him to do, does not have saving faith. He has a dead faith. James says *“faith without works is dead.”* (James 2:20). He also says that faith alone will not save, it will not justify one (James 2:14, 24). The believer must repent of sin if he is to be saved from sin.

And the Bible also teaches that the believer who repents must be baptized to be saved. In response to the question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do,” Peter said, *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* (Acts 2:38) Notice, repent and be baptized are both connected to the prepositional phrase “for the remission of sins. To have the forgiveness of sins one must both repent and be baptized. If you have not come to Jesus and obeyed his gospel, why obey Him today?

If we can assist you in your study or in your obedience, please give us a call. You may call us at 573-263-4690. Or you may email us at sjchurch@sjchurchofchrist.com.com.