

Repentance

I. REPENTANCE DEFINED

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

To define repentance let us first see what it is not:

1. Sorrow. Sorrow is a guilty feeling that leads to repentance, but it is not repentance.
2. Penance. Penance is an act on the part of the guilty to render payment for sin.
3. Reformation. Reformation is a change brought about by the efforts of man for self-glory.

Second, let us see that repentance is:

1. A change. The change is always evidenced in three elements.
 - (a) The intellectual element, a change of mind.
 - (b) The emotional element, a change of heart.
 - (c) The voluntary element, a change of will.
2. The parable of the prodigal son is a perfect illustration of repentance (Luke 15:11-32).
 - (a) The intellectual element, "he came to himself."
 - (b) The emotional element, "I have sinned."
 - (c) The voluntary element, "I will arise and go to my father."

Repentance is a change, the prodigal had a change of mind, and his change of mind effected a change of heart and his change of heart effected a change of will. No one is ever saved until he wills to be (Rev. 22:17). Repentance is a change of mind, of heart and of will.

II. REPENTANCE PREACHED

John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Mark 1:1-4

Repentance was preached in the Old Testament before the birth of Christ, and during the life and ministry of Christ. It was preached on the day of Pentecost, and in the book of Acts after Pentecost. It is taught in the Epistles and the book of Revelation. It is a doctrine to be preached and practiced in all dispensations.

1. John the Baptist preached repentance (Luke 3:3); (Matt. 3:2-3).
2. Jesus preached repentance (Mark 1:14-15); (Luke 13:1-5).
3. Peter preached repentance (Acts 2:38); (2 Peter 3:9).
4. Paul preached repentance (Acts 17:30).

III. REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Hebrews 6:1

What is meant by "repentance of dead works"? First, we need to see the other two categories of works. They are:

1. Good works (Mat. 5:16). Only saved souls can do good works and please God.
2. Wicked works (Col. 1:20-21). Wicked works are deeds done by the unregenerated, natural man (1 Cor. 2:14).
3. Dead works (Heb. 6:1). Dead works could be called religious works.

Dead works are performed by the religious who are, "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF REPENTANCE

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent. Acts 17:30

Repentance is so important that God commands “all men every where to repent”

1. The lost are to repent. Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matt. 9:13). Again, He said, “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3-5).
2. Backsliders are to repent. There were carnal Christians in the church at Corinth, in Paul's first letter he called upon the church to discipline the guilty. In his second letter he rejoices because the guilty repented. (2 Cor. 7:9).
3. Local churches are to repent. In the book of Revelation our Lord sent seven letters to seven churches. He called on five of the seven to repent (Chapters 2 & 3).
 - a. The Church at Ephesus was to repent because it had left its first love.
 - b. The Church at Pergamos was to repent because it permitted the doctrine of Balaam to be taught, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.
 - c. The Church at Thyatira was to repent because it suffered Jezebel to teach and seduce God's servants to commit fornication.
 - d. The Church at Sardis was to repent because it was a dying congregation.
 - e. The Church at Laodicea was to repent because it thought it was rich and did not need anything. In their opinion, they had arrived. They did not know that they were neither hot or cold, but lukewarm and God was ready to spew them out of His mouth.

The Lord called upon these five local churches to repent or else He would remove their candlestick and they would cease to be a light in darkness.

The lost are to repent or perish. The backslider is to repent or be disciplined. The local church is to repent or lose it's effectiveness in a world lost in sin.

V. THE EVIDENCE OF REPENTANCE

...that they should repent and turn to God, and do works met for repentance. Acts 26:19,20

The evidence of repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is seen in:

1. The repentance of unbelieving Thomas (John 20:24-29). Thomas would not believe that Christ had been raised from the dead until he saw the risen Saviour and was given the opportunity to touch His nail pierced hands and thrust his hand into His wounded side. Thomas repented, believed, and made his great confession of faith, “My Lord and my God.”
2. Three thousand changed their minds, hearts, and wills on the day of Pentecost and immediately gave evidence of repentance (Acts 2:41-47).
3. Saul of Tarsus experienced repentance when he met Jesus on the Damascus road and gave evidence of repentance (Acts 59:1-18).
4. Cornelius, his family and friends repented when they heard the gospel preached by Simon Peter, and evidence of repentance followed (Acts 10:24-48).
5. The Philippian jailer and his house repented when witnessed to by Paul and Silas, the evidence of repentance followed (Acts 16:26-34).

Repentance is a change of mind, the heart and the will. The proof of repentance is:

1. Turning from sin (Ezek. 18:30).
2. Turning to God (Acts 26:20).
3. Followed by good deeds (Acts 26:20).