

“God Call Us To Repent”
Jeremiah 7: 1 – 11; Luke 3: 1 – 18; Luke 24: 36 – 48 (Sermon)

The need for people to repent is stressed throughout The Bible.

The word repent or repentance is used at least 46 times in The Old Testament and at least 65 times in The New Testament.

Therefore, we need to get serious about repenting.

First what does it mean to repent?

There are two Greek words which are translated as the English word repent.

The Greek word used in verse 47 of our text from Luke is *Meta'noia* which means to change one's mind, it involves an instantaneous change of heart, a sincere regret for unbelief or sin. It always involves a determination to change direction.

This is the same Greek word John The Baptist and Jesus used when they said **“Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.”**

Repent means to turn away from sin and to turn to God. Real repentance (*Meta'noia*) always begins with confession and a sincere confession will result in Jesus forgiving the sin that was confessed.

1st John 1:9 clearly states **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

Meta'noia is **not** the Greek word used when Judas Iscariot repented after Judas saw that Jesus was condemned to die. (Matthew 27:3). That Greek word, *Metame'lomai* means to regret because something did not turn out as planned.

That Greek word does not convey any remorse that a person did something wrong. It simply conveys regret without remorse!

There are two false views about repenting that we need to clear up.

The first misconception is that *repentance is only applicable to people who are not saved.*

The Bible clearly teaches that repentance is applicable to Christians as well as non-believers.

All people need to repent because we are all sinners.

Romans 3:23 states **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** And Romans 3:10 states; **“there is no one righteous, not even one”.**

Jesus said, **“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”** (Luke 5: 32)

In the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Revelation we have the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor.

These letters were dictated by our Risen Glorified Lord Jesus to The Apostle John to write down.

Six times Jesus warned these churches to repent.

We as individual and we as the Church need to repent each day because we are all sinners.

Repentance is not just a one-time experience when we are saved.

Repenting should be a way of life for all Christians.

The second misconception about repenting is that confession is the same as repenting.

Confession is necessary but confession is useless unless it comes from the heart.

A genuine confession only comes when we meditate on how much our thoughts, our words, and / or our actions have brought grief and disappointment to Almighty God.

A genuine confession only comes when we realize that our actions or our inactions have separated us from God.

A genuine confession involves being so sorry for what you have done or failed to do that you do not want to ever repeat your mistake.

A genuine confession will always lead a person to repent.

Repenting is about changing our attitude about the seriousness of sin.

Repenting means turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

It is only when we seek the power of The Holy Spirit that we are able to stop committing that particular sin.

The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live the abundant victorious life that God planned for us. (John 10:10)

That brings us to the reasons why Christians need to repent.

Obviously, repentance is an essential starting point of the Christian journey.

We begin our walk with The Lord by admitting we are sinners, expressing our sorrow for the sin in our life, and admitting that we need Jesus to save us.

And after we are saved, we can only continue our daily walk with The Lord if we practice repenting each and every day since sin separates us from God's presence.

Jesus began His ministry with the need to repent.

In Mark 1:15 Jesus said, "*The time has come,*" "*The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!*"

Jesus urged people to change the way they viewed God as well as the way they interacted with God and with other people.

Repentance is really good news because when we repent, we realize that The Kingdom of Heaven is near.

In Luke 13:3 Jesus tells us unless we repent, we will all perish.

Without repentance a person cannot be part of The Kingdom of God.

Since sin separates us from our Holy God we must continually repent of our sins if we are to enjoy fellowship with our Creator God.

Without repentance a person cannot enjoy fellowship with The Lord.

2nd Corinthians 5:17 tells us, ***“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.”***

Repenting should be a way of life for the Christian.

The Apostle Peter emphasized repenting in his Pentecost sermon by saying when a person changes their attitude about God and changes their attitude about sin they would be forgiven and they would receive God’s gift of The Holy Spirit.

As a believer you have already received God’s gift of The Holy Spirit but without repenting a person cannot be filled with The Holy Spirit each and every day.

Ephesians 5:18 tells us; ***“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”***

The Apostle Paul also emphasized repentance.

“I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.” (Acts 20:21)

You see, repenting is a necessary ingredient of faith in Jesus Christ.

Acts 3: 19 & 20 tells us that repenting brings refreshment to our souls.

“Repent then and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out and times of refreshing may come from The Lord”

Repenting each day is a necessary part of The Holy Spirit’s work of transforming a believer into the image of Jesus Christ.

Repenting each day also makes us available and useful to The Lord.

And as we saw in our lesson from Luke Jesus concluded His ministry on earth with a command emphasizing repentance.

Luke 24:46-47 says, ***“He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”***

So if you are going to be faithful evangelist, you must practice repentance.

While it is possible for spirit filled Christians to live a life that is victorious over sin, we all stumble and we all fall from time to time.

When The Holy Spirit convicts us of wrong attitudes or sinful actions, we too need to repent.

In 1st John 2:1 we read, ***“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have One who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”***

The Apostle John shared this promise just after he had assured us in 1st John 1:9, ***“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”***

When we are truly sorry for our sins and we repent Jesus wipes the slate clean once again.

We as individuals and we as the church will not experience the transforming power of The Holy Spirit unless and until we place the same level of emphasis on repenting that Jesus did.

Repenting is both an act and an attitude.

Repentance is a journey in which we continually seek the mind of Jesus Christ and we continually strive to know God’s will in every area of our life.

As Christians we all need to repent because the way we live projects a very loud message about our relationship with Jesus.

Jesus said; ***“If you love me, keep my commandments.”*** (John 14:15)

Now since that is true the reverse is also true.

If you are not living like Jesus taught that means you do not love Jesus.

And friends I know that is not a message you want to give to the people around you.

Colossians 1:10-14 gives us a good picture of true repentance.

“And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints

in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Our lesson from Jeremiah also challenges all of us to look at why we come to church and to seriously think about the purpose of us coming to worship.

To the Jews the temple represented God’s presence with them.

Going to the temple and participating in a ritual of making sacrifices and tithing gave these Jews a false sense of security.

These Jews thought that as long as they went to the temple, offered sacrifices, and tithed God would protect them regardless of how they lived.

They forgot that the purpose of going to the temple was to remind them of their sinful ways, to confess their sins, and to receive forgiveness so that they could come into the presence of Almighty God and to receive The Lord’s instruction.

Instead of humbly coming as penitent people to receive pardon and grace from The Lord, these Jews came demanding what they felt God owed them.

These Jews were religious, they went through a ritual of worship, but their hearts were far from The Lord.

You see they attempted to come before our holy God without refraining from their sinful ways.

As a result, God told them that He was going to punish them with a deadly disease, a large number of them would die, and that all normal social functions would be interrupted. (Jeremiah 16:4)

1st Corinthians 10:6 tells us that the accounts in Old Testament were recorded so that we would not repeat the mistakes of the Jewish people.

Today we need to pray like the psalmist prayed; ***“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.”*** (Psalm 139:23) and to repent.

And Psalm 51:17 tells us that The Lord will not despise the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart.

God’s Word to us today challenges all of us to take an honest look at ourselves and our relationship with Almighty God.

We need to see ourselves the way God sees us.

When we take an honest look at ourselves, we are quickly reminded that we are all sinners.

Yes, we are saved by grace, but we are still sinners and that means we all need to repent of our sinful acts and our sinful attitudes so we can come into the presence of our Holy God’s and so we can receive The Lord’s blessings.

Think about this:

- If our civil leaders would repent, we would have a better country!
- If our spiritual leaders would repent, we would have better churches!
- If married couples would repent, we would have better marriages
- If parents would repent, we would have better children!
- If we would all repent, we would all be better Christians!

Today Jesus is calling each one of us to seriously look into our hearts and to make sure that our relationship with Jesus Christ is all that it should be.

Jesus' call to repent should always be looked at an opportunity for us to become more like Jesus.

You see, repenting is an invitation for us to change our fundamental attitude our view of sin, change our view of about God, change our view of ourselves, change our view of other people, as well as to change our view of material things.

Repenting is a valuable and necessary part of every Christian's daily life.

There is no greater way for a person to give glory to God than to practice repenting each day.

AMEN