

SIN & REPENTANCE



"We believe that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and that the repentance required by God, for all men, is necessary for the forgiveness of sins."

1. Sin:

a. Old Testament

- Gen 3:6-7 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.
- Gen 3:19 "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."
- Gen 3:23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.
- Isa 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

b. New Testament

- Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.
- 1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

c. Summary

- Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

d. Hope

- Rom 3:24 ... and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

2. Repentance:

a. Key Scriptures

- Acts 2:38-39
- Luke 15:7-10
- Ezekiel 18:30-32

b. Introduction

In order to become a Christian, or a child of God, the first step necessary is to repent. Looking at the original Greek and Hebrew gives us an insight into what this word means. The Greek word translated "repentance" is "metanoia" which means to have another mind, or to change course after further insight (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15). One of the Hebrew words translated "repentance" is "shub" which means "to turn back" i.e. Making a U turn in our experience (1 Kings 8:47; Ezekiel 14:6). Today, the word "repent" has come to mean simply feeling sorry for what we have done, or regretting something, but as we can see, in Bible terms it has a more profound meaning than this. In fact, to repent is the first movement of discipleship.

c. What is True Repentance?

It is a complete about turn in thought and action.

1) We change our thinking

There is a new perspective of the nature, awfulness and consequence of sin. There is a recognition that what we are in ourselves is deeply abhorrent to a holy God.

2) We change our actions

We turn to God from our disobedience, selfishness and rebellion. We turn away from sin and we submit our lives to God and make Jesus our Lord.

It is our responsibility to repent. We have all sinned and so we all need to accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord. On the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sin and brought us back into a relationship with God, but we have to repent of our sins and then live with Jesus as our Lord. God can do no more, the rest is up to us.

d. Three Important Elements in Repentance

1) Repentance Is Cognitive

This means very simply that there is something to be understood. Repentance involves recognition of our sin and its awfulness in the eyes of a holy God. God wants us to see our sin and to compare it with His holiness. God wants us to see where we stand with Him. He wants us to yield our lives into His hands and to allow the Holy Spirit to show us these things, especially as we read the Word of God.

2) Repentance Is Emotional

If we truly recognise our state before God, we will have a powerful emotional reaction (Isaiah 6:5). It will involve a deep sense of offence and regret (Psalm 51:9). We will feel the weight of all that is wrong in our lives. This feeling can only truly be removed when we come through to a place of receiving God's forgiveness (2 Corinthians 7:9-10). Godly sorrow is part of the Holy Spirit's way of bringing us to the place where we will receive the Word of God for our lives.

3) Repentance Is Volitional

That is, it involves the will. Repentance is a change of mind, of heart, of purpose, in fact, the whole direction of one's life. It is conversion. It is an "about turn" and the start of a whole new life lived under the power of God. The initiative for this act of repentance lies with God, in that He shows us our need and our state before Him, but we must act upon this revelation (Romans 2:4). The choice is ours!

e. The Power of Forgiveness

Repentance does not stand alone - forgiveness is its spiritual twin. After we have experienced our poor state in the presence of God's holiness, we need to experience the greatness of God's love and mercy. God gave us His only Son so that we might have forgiveness. It cost Him a lot, but that is how much He loves us (1 John 1:7-9). There is only one way to rid ourselves of our sins and that is out of the mouth i.e. Confess them. God will forgive us if we, at the same time, take Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. When we do this God forgets that we ever sinned in the first place. He wipes His memory of that sin clean. We no longer need to feel condemned or guilty, because God has accepted us.

"Do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience, not realising that God's kindness leads you towards repentance". (Romans 2:4).

f. Questions and Discussion Points

1. Can we truly repent if we don't really know how God sees us and our lives and actions?.
2. Why isn't it good enough just to be sorry for our sins?
3. Will life be boring and dull when we repent, since we seemingly have to give up so much?
4. In practical terms, what will true repentance involve in our daily lives?
5. When we go God's way instead of our own, what will rule in our hearts? (Colossians 3:15-17).

g. Summary and Application

1. What we give ourselves to and feed our minds on, will end up becoming the most important things to us.
2. We need to repent by turning from our sinful, selfish ways, and turn to God and go His way. He loves us, knows us and wants only the best for us.
3. We need to dethrone self in our lives and offer ourselves up to God for His ownership. Let Jesus be our Lord.

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