

Repentance

Matthew 4:17

- A. Matthew 4:17 – “From that time, Jesus began to preach and to say, repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”
 - 1. As sinners we need to be cleansed.
- B. There are basically four kinds of sins which call us to repentance.
 - 1. Original Sin: The root of all sin which every person is a part of.
 - 2. Collective Sin: The sin for which everyone is responsible even though they might not have been directly involved: racism, slavery, religious persecution, etc.
 - 3. Personal Sin: The individual acts we commit which separate us from God.
 - 4. Hereditary Sin: The ten commandments state that the sin of the parents will be conveyed through several generations (Exodus 20:5). These are sins inherited through the blood lineage.
- C. At various times in biblical history, God called his people to repentance for individual and collective sins.
 - 1. Elijah spoke about repentance to the Israelites
 - a. People in government were accepting bribes (Isaiah 1:23)
 - b. The populace, filled with pride and haughtiness, were focusing their faith on idols (Isaiah 2:17 – 18).
 - c. The children were subject over the parents and women were ruling the household (Isaiah 3:12), drawing attention to themselves in the streets with gawdy ornamentation (Isaiah 3:18).
 - d. The harvest of the poor was given to the rich (Isaiah 3:14).
 - e. The wealthy used up the best land for living and left little ground for planting (Isaiah 5:8).
 - f. Many were overcome with drinking (Isaiah 5:11).
 - g. God was not longer recognized in their works nor glorified for His works (Isaiah 5:12).

- h. Vanity was at the root of iniquities, and what was evil was considered good to do and what was good was ignored (Isaiah 5:20).
 - 2. Therefore the people were called to repentance for all these things to save their nation and to be prepared for the Messiah.
 - 3. John the Baptist also called the people to repentance to prepare for the coming of the Lord.
 - 4. Before God does a great work, biblical history shows He first calls His people to repent.
- D. A common belief among all Christian people is that we are living in the last days, the days of the return of Christ. As Christians today, do we feel called to repentance collectively as well as individually?
- 1. Jesus said that the iniquities spoken of in the Old Testament in light of ten commandments still stood (Matthew 5:17-18) except that from His time onwards even the thoughts of men were their iniquities (Matthew 5:28).
 - 2. If the transgressions mentioned in Isaiah (when not recognized by the people) resulted in bloodshed and exile, how will God work with our societies today?
- E. The power of repentance: What does it do?
- 1. Repentance reestablishes the direct and original relationship with God by confession
 - a. Through humility, reestablishing the heartistic communication with God.
 - b. Through reestablishing the communication with God, we come into the benefit of receiving the flow of God's love.
 - 2. Repentance brings freedom from accusation by Satan. It brings freedom from guilt, and peace and freedom in the soul.
 - 3. Helps find the true relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - 4. Rekindles the perception of God's Love, and response in glorifying God in daily life.
 - 5. The power of repentance establishes the base for the kingdom of goodness, i.e., the kingdom of Heaven.
- F. How to repent: what to do
- 1. Maintain a strong prayer life, centered on our hope: "Thy kingdom come, they will be done..." (Matthew 6:10).
 - 2. Come to a receptive state of heart to receive Christ.

- G. The results of repentance is the release from the bondage of Satan, the oxen's yoke is removed. We can stand again before God as adopted sons and daughters, adopted families, and adopted congregations, and the spirit of God may descend to lead us through Christ in our daily life.
- H. Are we among those Christians who have failed to implement Jesus' teaching, or taken the gospels merely as devotional material rather than words to be lived and used as a basis for social interaction? If we are, we need to restore our position in a relationship to God and Christ to be able to restore Matthew 5:48 where Jesus said, "You therefore must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." These words were not advice, but practical instruction, which is substantiated in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 to 7.
- I. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son... So all of mankind must return to God as the perfect body of Christ to meet Him at His return.
- J. This day is near. The last days are now. We must prepare ourselves to meet Christ.
- K. As at the time of Pentecost when 120 people were gathered together in prayer and longing for Christ, so we as Christians today, disregarding theological difference, must stand together as one family to receive Christ when he returns.
- L. Let's all prepare our heart to cleanse ourselves with repentance that we may be able to unite with him at His coming.