

JESUS COMMANDED REPENTANCE

Lost Doctrine of Repentance

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:”
Acts 17:30

“Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.” Ezek. 36:31

“Without repentance and faith, sin cannot be pardoned.”

By Pastor Del Wray

Jesus commanded repentance from us all, from the entire human race of mankind. No exception! But still mankind has chosen to swallow the devil's lie. Old “slew foot” as my mother use to call him, using the same old trick that he used on Eve way back in the Garden. Did God really mean what He said? What did He mean? I'll tell you what He meant; He meant “repent!” Preachers, pastors today as they have always been just as gullible as ever have accepted the devil's lie, and have taken Christ's direct command, changing it to fit their own policy of appeasement, concession and pacification. And people go on trusting their pastor, some man, that too, is against God's direct command not to trust man. “...*cursed is the man that trusteth in man...*” Jer. 17:5. If He had wanted you to trust any man, He would never have given you His Word, His final authority. He would have gone on speaking to mankind through His prophets, as in the Old Testament. Anyone can see the spirit of Jezebel at work in this, conspiring to deceive even the saved. The thing that bugs me is all those out here that set in churches where some pervert refuses to preach on one of the greatest doctrines in the Bible, repentance, and you still support this illegitimate son, a bastard. You're as guilty as he. Unbelief and mammon is the cause. Below are some thoughts to help make the meaning of repentance clearer, which I shouldn't haft to do. We should just be taking God at His Word.

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Luke 13:3-5 King James Version (KJV)

“From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17

“I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:32

“The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold something greater than Jonah is here.” Matthew 12:41

“Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” Luke 13:3 and 5

The very first command of Jesus' public ministry was, “Repent.” He spoke this command indiscriminately to all who would listen. It was a call for radical inward change toward God and man.

Two things show us that repentance is an internal change of mind and heart rather than mere sorrow for sin or mere improvement of behavior. The meaning refers to the mind and its thoughts and perceptions and dispositions and purposes. So the basic meaning of repent is to experience a change of the mind's perceptions and dispositions and purposes.

The other factor that points to this meaning of repent is the way Luke 3:8 describes the relationship between repentance and new behavior. It says, "*Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.*" Then it gives examples of the fruits: "*Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise*" Luke 3:11. This means that repenting is what happens inside of us that lead to the fruits of new behavior. Repentance is not the new deeds, but the inward change that bears the fruit of new deeds. Jesus is demanding that we experience this inward change.

Why? His answer is that we are sinners. "*I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance*" Luke 5:32. What was Jesus' view of sin? In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus describes the son's sin like this: "He squandered his property in reckless living . . . and devoured it with prostitutes" Luke 15:13 and 30. But when the prodigal repents he says, "*Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.*" Therefore, throwing your life away on reckless living and prostitutes is not just humanly hurtful; it is an offense against heaven, that is, against God. That's the essential nature of sin. It's an assault on God.

We see this again in the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray. He said that they should pray, "Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us" Luke 11:4. In other words, sins that God forgives are compared to the ones people commit against us, and those are called debts. Therefore, Jesus' view of sin was that it dishonored God and put us in debt to restore the divine honor we had defamed by our God-belittling behavior or attitudes. That debt is paid by Jesus himself. "*The Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many*" Mark 10:45. But for us to enjoy that gift he says we must repent.

Repenting means experiencing a change of mind that now sees God as true and beautiful and worthy of all our praise and all our obedience. This change of mind also embraces Jesus in the same way. We know this because Jesus said, "*If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God.*" Seeing God with a new mind includes seeing Jesus with a new mind.

No one is excluded from Jesus' command to repent. He made this clear when a group of people came to him with news of two disasters. Innocent people had been killed by Pilate's massacre and by the fall of the tower of Siloam Luke 13:1-4. Jesus took the occasion to warn even the bearers of the news: "*Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish*" Luke 13:5. In other words, don't think that disasters mean that some people are sinners in need of repentance and others aren't. All need repentance. Just as all need to be born again because "*that which is born of the flesh is flesh*" John 3:6, so all must repent because all are sinners. The pastor that will not preach on repentance is guilty of sleeping with a whore and is in bed with the fowl spirit, Jezebel, fornicating with the devil. And those that support and listen to his lizard tongue are culpable of aiding the murder of lost souls.

When Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" Luke 5:32, He did not mean that some persons are good enough not to need repentance. He meant some think they are Luke 18:9 and others have already repented and have been set right with God. For example, the rich young ruler desired "*to justify himself*" Luke 10:29 while "*the tax collector . . . beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'*" and went down to his house justified Luke 18:13-14.

Therefore, none is excluded. All need repentance. And the need is urgent. Jesus said, "*Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*" What did he mean by perish? He meant that the final judgment of God

would fall on those who don't repent. *"The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here"* Matthew 12:41. Jesus, the Son of God, is warning people of the judgment to come, and offering escape if we will repent. If we will not repent, Jesus has one word for us, *"Woe, to you"* Matthew 11:21.

This is why his command for repentance is part of his fundamental message that the kingdom of God is at hand. *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel"* Mark 1:15. The gospel, the good news, is that the rule of God has arrived in Jesus to save sinners before it arrives at his second coming in judgment. So the command to repent is based on the gracious offer that is present to forgive, and on the gracious warning that someday those who refuse the offer will perish in God's judgment.

After he had risen from the dead Jesus made sure that his apostles would continue the call for repentance throughout the world. He said, *"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem"* Luke 24:46-47. So the command of Jesus to repent goes to all the nations. It comes to us, whoever we are and wherever we are, and lays claim on us. This is the command of Jesus to every soul: Repent. Be changed deep within. Replace all God-dishonoring, Christ-belittling perceptions and dispositions and purposes with God-treasuring, Christ-exalting living.

Most pulpits and pulpiteers have lost the vital doctrine of repentance. The doctrine has disappeared from America's pulpits, and been neglected by the pastors because of its radically challenging nature. Exponential growth of individual churches governs what is delivered from the pulpit. A pleasing and soothing new gospel has come forth in the 20th century to lure the masses into churches. The new gospel meets peoples' perceived physical and emotional needs, and ensures them that God's love and sacrifice covers their sins. The new gospel is automatically appropriated when the person prays the sinner's prayer to God. Congregants sit in their pews each Sunday believing that they are saved with a simple faith, when in reality they lack faith altogether. They have been told to "decide for Jesus," but they have decided for a false Christ Matthew 24:24.

Those who hold to Calvinism and Arminianism can in large part be blamed for this phenomenon. The fruit of their defective preaching is today's new evangelical gospel that contradicts God's eternal gospel given throughout Scripture. A sinner is no longer challenged to undergo a thorough mind and life change in order to prove his salvation and discipleship under Christ. A simple prayer brings the blessings from heaven down upon the soul, according to the modern day gospel. Fortunately, God's Word gives us His gospel Mk 1:1, which is forbidden to be changed. No one is allowed to subtract or add to the true gospel; therefore, those who eliminate repentance and only preach a simple faith in Jesus are in opposition to God. May Paul's charge in Galatians 1:9-12 motivate Christians to rely solely upon the gospel found in the Word of God:

"As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" Gal. 1:9-12.

The Lord saves a soul without aid from man or woman. He has chosen, though, to use Believers to help Him proclaim His gospel by calling sinners to repentance and faith. He blesses His gospel as it goes forth, and in due time, He works out the intended results. God's eternal gospel results in true conversions, blessed assurance, and fruit bearing believers who live their lives to glorify God. When a person alters

God's gospel, and presents a human derived gospel to a soul, it fails to receive God's blessings and power. Salvation will not result from the issuance of a false gospel. The new modern gospel results in spurious conversions, false assurance, and spiritually dead blind hypocrites. Jezebel's brew! Believers all share the responsibility to take the message to the lost. Christians must know that: Repentance and faith begets eternal salvation and fruit bearing service to the Lord.

"God is now commanding all men everywhere to repent." This Scriptural command will be in effect until the consummation of the ages. Repentance is, in fact, a wonderful blessing to the sinner who has finally realized his sinful plight. What joy to discover that you're Creator has given you a second chance in life! A fresh start with a renewed mind and a forgiven soul awaits you if you allow His Spirit to carry out true repentance and faith in God through His Son Jesus Christ. Let God's work bear fruit in your life.

"God is now commanding all men everywhere to repent."