

REPENTANCE IS A GIFT OF GOD

“...to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”
Acts 5:31

“Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.” Acts 11:18

By Pastor Del Wray

There is not a contradiction in the Bible! You may find something that seems to be contradictory but when followed through it will prove not to be so. My subject is not a contradiction. God commands repentance; yet, repentance is a gift of God. If a “gift” is forced on someone, it is not a gift at all! The same is true of the gift of repentance. God doesn’t force anyone to repent; He simply makes the opportunity to repent available. This is the sense in which repentance as a gift should be understood.

God exalted Jesus *“to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins”* Acts 5:31. When certain Jewish Christians witnessed the conversion of Cornelius and his household, *“they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life’”* Acts 11:18. Paul hopes that, through Timothy’s efforts in correcting certain offenders, *“God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth”* 2 Timothy 2:25.

But how does the process work? Through what means does God “grant them repentance”? God, through His Spirit, leads a person to an awareness of both sin and righteousness, thus enabling Him to “hear” the command to repent. Jesus promised that, after His departure, the Holy Spirit would come and *“convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged”* John 16:8–11. The Spirit convicts the world of sin and righteousness through the Church’s preaching of the good news.

God often uses the circumstances of day-to-day life in bestowing upon us the gift of repentance. The gift may come through the positive Christian example of a neighbor, or from reading a booklet on an intriguing biblical topic, or from a chain of events spanning many weeks or months, or even years. Shocking events in the news, such as the terrorist attacks such as the one of September 11, 2001, may be the catalyst that enables a person to receive God’s gift of repentance. On the other hand, positive events, such as people coming together to help relieve the suffering of others may have an awakening effect through which God can bestow the gift of repentance. God can and does use the events of life, ordinary and extraordinary, to awaken people to their need of repentance.

2 Tim. 2:25, *“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure **will give them** repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;”*

Acts 5:31, *“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”*

2 Timothy 2:24-26, *“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them*

repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.” 2 Samuel 12:13

David was a man of contrasts. As a young man he was zealous for God’s glory 1 Sam. 17; refused to lift his hand against God’s anointed 1 Sam. 24; 26; and displays great compassion 2 Sam. 9. But David also committed serious sins. He committed adultery with Bathsheba 2 Sam. 11; conspired to have Bathsheba’s husband killed 2 Sam. 11; tempted God through a census 2 Sam. 24; and was a poor father who refused to deal with the sin of his children 2 Sam. 13. So, why does the Bible call David a man after God’s own heart Acts 13:22 even though he had such a flawed, sinful character? Perhaps it is because David was tenderhearted when confronted over his sin. When Nathan the prophet confronted David for his sins of adultery with Bathsheba, and the murder of her husband, David’s response was one of confession and repentance. Unlike his predecessor, Saul, David did not try to justify his actions 1 Sam. 15. David understood his sin, readily confessed it, and turned from it. That is a sign of a regenerate heart.

“Repentance grows as faith grows. Do not make any mistake about it; repentance is not a thing of days and weeks, a temporary penance to be got over as fast as possible! No; it is the grace of a lifetime, like faith itself. God’s little children repent, and so do the young men and the fathers. Repentance is the inseparable companion of faith.” C. H. Spurgeon

I FOUND REPENTANCE IN THE BOOK. IT HAS BEEN LOST IN THE CHURCH AND THE BOOK HAS BEEN LOST FROM THE UNREPENTANT WORLD.