

Repentance From Dead Works

Hebrews 6

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, **2** and of instruction about washings,[a] the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Primary & Secondary Doctrines

E.g. looks like a complete home, but structurally deficient therefore has time limit on its current state.

- Fundamental - breathing and heart beat
- Necessary - bathing, brushing teeth

Justification by Faith

(No person can't justify themselves before God through their own merit)

2 Pillars of this:

- Repentance from dead works
- Faith towards God

Repentance

- Gk; *Mentanoien* = change ones mind

- + turn back (Change ones mind in such a way that it leads to a change in conduct or direction)
- Not emotion but DECISION

E.g. Person travelling to a certain destination, looks out the window of the train and discovers they are on the wrong train. What you see registers with your intellect and as a result emotions are disturbed. However this does not change your situation!! Conscious decision needed of your will to get off that train and get on the right one. Unless that is done, tears wont change anything.

- Replicated in Salvation - Deeply emotional, but need a conscious decision. Turning and following Jesus - otherwise path is towards destruction.

A Means to Escape

The coming Judgement – Luke 3:7-9 Acts 2:38-41

A Means to Enter

The Kingdom of God - Without repentance there can be no forgiveness of sins and therefore no salvation.

A Means to Receive

Repentance is working with God so that He can work with you in restoration, healing and deliverance - John 2:8-10.

The Source of Repentance

The Loving Kindness of God

Rom 2:4 4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

God is rich in mercy towards us and will tolerate our behaviour, but only up to a point.

There may come a time when He will let us go our own way and we may not be able to find our way back - Rom 1:18-32. Let's not push it too far and take Gods' loving nature for granted.

A Gift From God

2 Tim 2:25:26 Heb 12:15-16.

- God offers this to you, to every person
- Reflection of desires of our heart
- Opportunity to repent is limited...no man knows the hour of his life Repentance is outside of mans control - Esau was rejected because he despised his birthright and gave it up for a morsel of food. Repentance cannot be worked up or initiated by man, (e.g. I'll sin today and repent tomorrow).

Through Conviction Produced By -

- **Dreams & Visions** - Job 33:14-17, Acts 9:3-9 (Saul on road to Damascus)
- **Adversity** - Job 33:18-30, Lam 1:20, Luke 15:17-21 (Prodigal Son)
- **The Gospel** - Acts 2:37 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 1Co 14:24-25
- **The Conscience** - John 8:9 (women in adultery, cast first stone) Rom 2:15
- The Holy Spirit - John 16:7-11. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. You
- **God** - Deut 28:65-67, Ps 38:1-22, 51:1-4 Have mercy on me,[a] O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

For forgiveness to take place a person must accept and submit to conviction. *This must be followed by a repentant heart.* **Conviction without repentance leaves a person with a sense of guilt without remedy.** These verses show us clearly that God alone is the source of all repentance. Without Him we will be left to our own devices - blind to the truth and blind to our own sinful condition.

Fruits of Repentance

Luke 3:7-14 - If to repent is to have a change of heart leading to a change of action, then true repentance is made evident by the way we speak and act. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks and as a man thinks, so is he. *We cannot say we have truly repented if we wilfully continue to live as we lived previously.*

There are two very common dangers that we need to be aware of:

PROCRASTINATION

So many people realise their need of the Saviour, but are not prepared to make the decision until a more convenient time. It has been well said that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions". What in fact happens is that they stay on the "wrong train" until it is too late to get off and get onto the right one.

In Acts 24:25 Felix was tremendously moved by Paul's preaching, and yet his words betrayed his attitude to Jesus, *"go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you"*.

- We have no record of Felix ever coming to salvation. Repentance is the gift of God. We cannot come to Him when we feel like it, when it is convenient for us – we have to come when He calls us!

COUNTERFEITS

These crop up when we refuse to come God's way:

Remorse

2 Cor 7:9-10 "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner ... for godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."

- Judas experienced such intense anguish and remorse that he committed suicide. This was not true scriptural repentance; he did not change his mind or his direction. This type of sorrow often leads to suicide. It is a sorrow that results from not getting one's own way or from being caught out at doing wrong. It always causes a sense of hopelessness and despair.

Reformation (Turn over a new leaf)

- This happens when people realise that they have failed and don't measure up to God's standard. An inner witness tells them something is wrong, but instead of humbling themselves and turning to God, they try to turn over a new leaf by going to church, getting involved in some charitable organisation or doing something that makes them feel better.

- The leaves are trimmed, but the roots remain the same.

Penance

- So many try to justify themselves before God by "paying for their sin" through some self-imposed suffering e.g. vows of silence, poverty, etc. What an affront this is to God – a total rejection of all that Jesus did at Calvary!

- True repentance is wonderfully illustrated in the story of the prodigal son **Luke 15:11-32** "He came to himself" – realizing where he was – "I will arise and go to my father" - (Verse 20) "And he arose and came to his father".

Repentance as a Lifestyle

From Hidden Sin - Psalm 139:23-24. Matt 26:41

- Reliance upon God's Mercy to expose hidden sin.
- Regular prayer must be made to expose hidden sin.

From Known Sin - 1 John 1:8-9

- We must be willing to repent whenever God reveals to us our true condition.

From Uncommanded Work - 1 Cor 3:10-15 ** This is the one we miss...bit like gluttony ▶

- We must build with the right materials: gold, silver and precious stones are precious and durable. Buildings of wood, hay and straw have not been inspired by God and based upon the truth of His Word, and will be tested and destroyed by God's fire.

DEAD WORKS

Dead works are simply those things that we use to justify ourselves before God – "I live a good life! I go to church! I have never hurt anybody! I give to the poor! etc. etc. etc." It is

a very common attitude found amongst religious people and is an attempt to earn their salvation by good works or religious practices.

We need to realize that were we to live a million years, we could never justify ourselves. God's standard is perfection!

- Rom 3:20 "We have all sinned and come short of the Glory of God".
- Rom 6:23 "the wages of sin is death (eternal separation from God) but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord".
- Salvation is free – we can never earn it! We need to simply accept it by faith! People often say "But I'm not so bad!" To this we need to ask – "How many times do we have to sin to be a sinner? How many times do we need to break the law before we become a law breaker?" The obvious answer is "just once!" What would it avail me when fined for jumping traffic lights if my defence was – "But I've always stopped there! This is my first time in thirty years of driving that I failed to stop!"
 - James 2:10 "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."
 - If it were possible for us to justify ourselves before God, Jesus would never have died at Calvary! God's Word says that Isaiah 64:6 "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags"

Hinderances to Repentance

Pride – James 4:4-10

- An unwillingness to admit fault or weakness.
- The fear of loss of reputation or humiliation before others. Humble yourself. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
 - "I have repented, but they haven't it"true repentance would not require them to forgive.

Rebellion – Heb 3:12-15

- Choosing to ignore your conscience results in a hardening of the heart.

Ignorance – Hosea 4:6

- Ignorance is not an excuse for sin. We must seek the Will of the Lord and do it.