

Sermon 18 July 2021

Good Day Friends,

What a sad state of affairs has our country not been in, if not only for Covid but the violence and the looting. God must be so hurt by what His people say and do. He must be shaking His head at South Africa and I am certain His Heart must be braking. Please pray like you have never prayed before for the salvation of our land. We need to stand in the gap and ask for God's forgiveness.

Repentance.

Luke 16:19-31

We begin with the sin Adam and Eve committed. God has been calling for all humanity to repent of their sins. Repentance is a message that the prophets of old preached to the world. Men like Isaiah called for “the wicked to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and return to the Lord.” As God moved towards the New Covenant His message of repentance did not change. John The Baptist cried out “Repent for the kingdom of God is near.” (Matthew 3:2). When Jesus went from village to village preaching the Good News, His message was as Mark 1;15 tells us “Repent and believe the good news!” When Jesus sent His disciples to preach the Kingdom of God, He told them to preach “...and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all the nations..” (Luke 24:47). They did this from the day of Pentecost. Peter and the disciples called the people to repent and to be baptised for the remission of their sins. And through the disciples, Gods message of repentance has spread through the world up till today.

Let start by asking the question, what does it mean to repent. We may answer that question by saying “It means we must change our ways.” The answer is lacking because it does not capture the full essence of how the Bible characterises what true repentance is. Repentance is so much more than just merely changing one's ways.

True repentance involves changing one's emotions, then one's mind and and finally changing one's actions. This is how repentance is described in the New Testament. The New Testament writers used three different words that shape the foundation of true repentance.

1. True Repentance is a change in emotions:

The first principle of repentance is to realise that we must we must firstly change our emotions. Jesus and the the New Testament writers used the Greek word *metamelomai* to describe this type of repentance. It literally means to care afterwards.

Jesus used this word in the parable of the Two Sons. The one son who refused to go and the son who said he would go and work in the vineyard but later refused to go,

while the one who originally refused had a change of heart and went. We see the son felt sorry for not doing what his father had commanded him to do. It was the sorrow that led to him to change his mind and his actions.

The Apostle Paul also uses this word when he explains the principle of true repentance. In 2 Corinthians he says the following, “Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it – I see my letter hurt you but only for a little while - yet now I am happy. Not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.” Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” In 1 Corinthians 5:1,2. “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?” Because of Paul's rebuke the congregation had changed their emotions towards their own sins and the sins of the adulterer and their mourning led to their repentance.

We live in a time when people do not recognise their sin or are not sorrowful about what they have done. As God's children we must recognise that we have sinned and are in need of repentance, then God wants us to mourn and weep over our sin. He wants sorrow to enter our lives because we are suffering the consequences of what we have done. It is only when we change our emotions, from joy and acceptance to sorrow and rejection toward our sins that we can begin to experience true repentance. There is more than being sorry for what we have done, our sorrow must lead to change of mind.

2. True Repentance is a change of mind:

The second principle in understanding true repentance, is to understand that we must not only change our emotions but we must also change our minds. Jesus and the New Testament writers used the Greek word *metanoeo* to describe this type of repentance. This is the general word translated repent - it literally means to think differently. He wants us to repent. We read the following in 2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Jesus conveys the principle that true repentance necessitates a changed mind. In Luke 5:32 He says that he did not “...come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” The sinner is the one in need of a changing of the mind, turning their thoughts away from sin to God.

In the parable we read about The Rich Man and Lazarus. The rich man tells Abraham that his brothers would not repent (change their minds) unless one went back from the dead. What were they to change their minds about towards God, or change their minds about righteousness or perhaps about the afterlife?

When Jesus came preaching repentance He wanted people to change their minds, He wanted them to repent.

If we are truly to repent of our sins the first things we must change are our emotions towards our sin. This change in emotions must lead us to have a changed mind. As Paul said in Romans 12:2, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind....” The CEV translation says it this way “Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think.” We need to let God change the way we think by:

1. Being mindful of the things of God. Matthew 16:23 says, “Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling – block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of man,”

2. Setting our minds on the things above. Colossians 3:2 says, “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

3. Being spiritually minded which leads to life. In Romans 8:6 we read the following, “The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the spirit is life and peace...”

Once we come to Christ. Once we repent of our sins, we can't be the same old person any more. We have to change the way we think.

3. True Repentance is a change of action.

The third and final principle in understanding true repentance is to understand that we must not only change our emotions and our minds but we also have to change our actions. The New Testament writers use the Greek word *epistrepho* to describe the type of repentance. This word generally translated means to convert or to turn.

Peter called his audience to, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped a out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.” Acts 3:19. We must repent(change mind), therefore and convert (change actions) that our sins may be blotted out.

Paul says, “Open the eyes (of the gentiles), in order to turn them from darkness to light, and that they may receive forgiveness of sins an an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith.”

The world tells us that we can do whatever we want. We are told we can follow any course, any philosophy, any path that suits our understanding. If true repentance is to take place; if our sins are to be blotted out and forgiven by God, and to have an inheritance with Him then we must change our ways. Instead of “walking after the flesh” we must change our ways and walk according the Spirit.

Perhaps there is no better passage that ties all principles together than the parable of the Prodigal Son. Luke 15:18-19. Here is a son of the father. Someone not much different than what we are. He took his inheritance and went off to a far country and

spent it all on sinful living. Notice how the prodigal Son truly repented.

He had a change of emotions. We read that in Luke 15:18-19 he says, "I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men." He had gone from being very proud to being humble and penitent.

He had a change of mind. Luke 15:17 says, "when he came to his senses, he said" ' how many of my fathers hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death."

He had a change of action. Luke 15:18-20 "I will go out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men. So he got up and went to his father."

God is calling for us to come to Him in true repentance. We must change our emotions, our minds and our actions and then we will be forgiven of our sins.

May God forgive us for what has taken place in our beautiful country this past week. May our country once more be restored to peace and tranquillity. My prayer is that we will be restored to be a Christian country with Christian morals.

Amen