

Sunday, September 5, 2021 am

## UNLESS YOU REPENT Luke 13:3

This being the first Sunday of the month, we continue addressing some fundamental lessons that we need to understand in becoming children of God. Today I want to address a subject that can be unpleasant, but it is still needed. Today, I want to talk about repentance, but I want to address it from the standpoint of its need in obeying the gospel. Nevertheless, the points made will be applicable to each of us as Christians. So let's get started.

### I. What is repentance?

- a. The word literally means "to perceive afterward" or "to change one's mind".
  - i. The idea of "to perceive afterward" means that you have done something, thought about it, realize it was wrong, and then you determine to not do that again. That is where "to change one's mind" comes into play.
  - ii. An example of this would be the parable of 2 sons in Matthew 21:28-31. The first son, who at first refused to obey his father, afterward regretted it and did what he was told. The second, said he would obey, but did not. The first son is an example of true repentance.
  - iii. Another example: Consider the instructions of Jesus to the rich, young ruler – "You have to give up..." – Matthew 19:21-22 – Here is an example of the charge to give up possessions (which were obviously more important to this ruler), but he "went away sorrowful because he had great possessions." Here is an example of NOT repenting!
  - iv. Thus we must understand that genuine repentance is a MINDSET that leads to genuine and lasting change.
- b. Repentance is misunderstood by many. What repentance is not:
  - i. Regretting what you have done – many regret something, but that is all they do.
  - ii. Saying, "I'm sorry" – this is an apology, but it is not enough. Someone can do something, say, "I'm sorry" for many, less than noble reasons – to get out of trouble, hoping to avoid consequences, or to garner sympathy.
  - iii. Repeated apologies – again, saying "I'm sorry" a million times does not make it so.
  - iv. Realizing you are guilty – you may know something is wrong, but how do you react with that?
  - v. Confessing your sins – some admit their sins – some proudly - even bragging about them. Others admit them with shame, but that does not necessarily mean they will change.
  - vi. Godly sorrow – this means being sorrowful before God. You may regret your sins before God and admit them to Him, but are you truly willing to change?
  - vii. Conditional confession – there are some who will admit they have done wrong, BUT then they begin to shift the blame to others. Think of the word, "BUT" used when one confesses. That is often not true repentance.
  - viii. Even if you stop doing something – that may not be repentance. Why have you stopped? Is it because you are unable to do that anymore? Does someone stop because they don't want to face punishment, or the risk of getting caught is too great?
  - ix. NOTE: In MOST of these you see good qualities that are associated with the PROCESS that leads to repentance, and you CANNOT have repentance without them, but they are NOT repentance.
- c. Thus, repentance is realizing, resolving to change your life and then taking the appropriate action. It is a TOTAL and complete change. More on this later.

### II. Does one need to repent before becoming a Christian?

- a. **John the Baptist** – Matthew 3:2, 8, etc. – the message of John was one of repentance. And calling out the corrupt leaders he told them to “bear fruits worthy of repentance”. Luke 3:3 called his baptism one of “repentance for the remission of sins” – he clearly taught true repentance in preparing for the Savior.
- b. **Jesus preaching about the kingdom** –
  - i. Matthew 4:17 – same message as John.
  - ii. Mark 1:15 – repent and believe in the gospel;
  - iii. Matthew 9:13 – He came to call sinners to repentance
  - iv. Luke 13:3 & 5 – our text, “*Unless you repent you will all likewise perish.*”
- c. **Consider the Ephesians burning their magic books** –
  - i. This is a good example of genuine repentance.
  - ii. Acts 19:18-20 records converts in Ephesus who had practiced witchcraft bringing their books and burning them. The total was 50,000 pieces of silver – that is 50,000 days wages.
  - iii. This shows a group that not only saw error in the action but took measures to ensure they could not return to that activity in the future.
- d. Numerous passages are directed toward the unsaved in becoming a Christian
  - i. Acts 2:38 – on Pentecost - “repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins”
  - ii. Acts 3:19 – “repent and be converted” or “repent and turn” – both demonstrate the changed mind leading to a changed action. This shows the mind changing which leads to the change in action
  - iii. Acts 17:30-31 – Paul speaking to the Athenians – God now commands all men everywhere to repent. The warning of judgment coming is a motivator.
  - iv. Acts 20:21 – Paul to the Ephesian elders noted how he served them and how he taught, testifying to Jews and Greeks alike (anyone) “*repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
  - v. Acts 26:20 – Paul before Agrippa retelling his conversion and preaching to the Gentiles. He notes that he preached to all “that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.
  - vi. 2 Peter 3:9 – God’s patience for us is with the hopes that all should come to repentance.
- e. Thus we can see, the answer to this question is: Yes! True repentance is part of obeying the gospel. And it needs to be understood and applied.

### III. **What does it mean to repent?**

- a. 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 – here is the primary passage describing repentance.
  - i. Notice that it is more than godly sorrow because that LED to their repentance.
  - ii. Vs. 11 describes the degree to which they went to correct their wrongs. It included:
    1. What diligence – note: “what” expressing a great degree of it.
    2. What clearing of yourselves – NASB – vindication.
    3. What indignation – mental disgust toward their behavior – they now viewed it as abhorrent.
    4. What fear – godly fear producing godly actions – cf. Hebrews 10:31
    5. What vehement desire, what longing – this shows a strong desire to get things right, RIGHT NOW! They wanted this behind them.
    6. What zeal – the fervent efforts taken to address this.
    7. What vindication (avenging of wrong – NASB) – this is the dispensing of justice. Doing the right thing!
    8. “IN all things you proved yourselves clear in this matter.” This is the summary. You can see by the description, they did EVERYTHING they could to right their wrongs. That is TRUE repentance.
- b. It means being willing to do what you can to right your wrongs.

- c. How does this apply to one becoming a Christian?
  - i. Are there activities you will have to give up? Are the actions that you are guilty of that you might need to change? Are there places you cannot go anymore? Do you need to change jobs? Sadly, often true conversion – which includes this repentance – usually involves some “prized possessions”. Maybe will have to give up your social drinking, dancing, gambling, unclean movies, profanity, and other things.
  - ii. In your resolve to put God first – which is what becoming a Christian is – Galatians 2:20 – there may be things you need to give up that are not wrong within themselves, but they just take away from developing as a Christian.
  - iii. Are there matters of restitution? If you have in your possession something that you have stolen, you cannot keep it.
  - iv. Are there relationships you might need to sever?
    - 1. We may have to walk away from worldly friendships – James 4:4, 1 Corinthians 15:33, 1 Peter 4:3-4 demonstrates this well.
    - 2. The Bible speaks of marriages that are unlawful (Matthew 19:4-9, 14:4, etc.). Would you even be willing to walk away from that?
- d. **Finally, this is something that when done should be evident.** We have seen this in several examples. Becoming a Christian means you HAVE TO change. And that change is going to be noticeable.
- e. After one has obeyed the gospel –
  - i. Of course, in becoming a Christian – the repentance helps you get started on the right path. But what about AFTER you obey the gospel? What if you find yourself back in sin?
  - ii. The solution for this ALSO involves repentance – Acts 8:22 – where Simon the magician is told to repent and pray. This accords with 1 John 1:9 which speaks of confessing our sins (based upon walking in the light – 1:7)
  - iii. That is also the context of 2 Corinthians 7:10-11
  - iv. The point is, if you get “off track” do what you need to do – with the SAME intensity as you first began – to get back on track.

And thus, we can see the need for repentance in becoming a Christian, and then as you live your life as a Christian. This is not an easy thing to accept, and even harder to apply. But eternity is at stake. And while hard to do, IF you obey God, you find it IS the better life and will give you a purer life here and a greater hope when this life is over.

Thus, I conclude by reminding us what the Lord said in Luke 13:3, “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish”, AND what John said in Matthew 3:8, “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.” So where do you stand? Are you bearing the fruits of repentance? Think about it!