

REPENTANCE

Background for the lesson

Should we be surprised that the world tries many wrong ways to find the Lord? Jesus gave the following instructions:

- John 3:16 – ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
- John 3:16 – ⁵⁴Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.
- John 4:3 – ¹⁰Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.
- John 6:35 – ⁵And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst .
- John 3:3 – ³Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
- Luke 13:3 – ⁵I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

First, we preachers understand that all the above instructions that Jesus gave were relative to the plan of salvation. Nevertheless, why are we surprised that some men give wrong directions to heaven, such as the following:

- Believe that Jesus is the Savior
- Take this communion of bread and wine
- Be baptized
- Change your life to follow the Lord
- Turn around and follow the Lord

As preachers, we must be very clear in our preaching to preach the way of salvation. As a young preacher, I tried to find a simple narrative about repentance. I may have been looking for greater meaning in “repent ye” than I found in “born again”. It seemed that many of the writers did not give in-depth attention to repentance. I guess I also was trying to find one simple answer as to how to preach about salvation.

I am convinced that repentance is a description of a **necessary part of the plan of salvation**, and that the persons writing about repentance were trying to cover all of the nine different words, translated as some form or use of repent. There is also the doctrinal issue that repentance and faith are inseparable. In addition, it appears that many of the writers were Calvinistic and made the discussion more difficult by limiting man's choice.

For this lesson, let us start with two verses that include instructions by Jesus relative to repentance. If we are scripturally sound in looking at these two verses as used by Jesus, we can then move to a more general use. In addition, the Calvinistic error does not limit our study of repentance. The two scriptures follow:

Matthew 3:7 - ⁷From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke 13:3 – ⁵I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Jesus preached that it was necessary for us to repent and except we repented, we would perish, or be destroyed. We will also begin the understanding that we are not going to separate repentance and faith.

Repentance

The subject is “repent” from sin, a verb, as follows: Matthew 3:7 - ⁷From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Luke 13:3 - ⁵I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Young's defines repent as used in Matthew 3:7 and Luke 13:3 as “To have another Mind” from “*metanoeo*”. Vines defines repent from “*metanoeo*” as “to perceive afterwards” (*Meta*, after, implying change, *noeo* to perceive: *nous*, the mind, the seat of moral reflection) ... signifies **to change one's mind or purpose**

Vine's summarizes the noun repentance as follows: “In the N. T. the subject chiefly has reference to repentance from sin, and this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God” Acts 20:21 - ²¹Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider, turning, in the above discussion. We know that simply changing our mind is not sufficient for salvation as shown in Romans 8:5-7 - ⁵For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Based on Vine's summary of the meaning of repent as used by Jesus and Paul's separation of carnal and spiritual, the turning or change must be spiritual.

We can define repentance and faith as our spiritual turning from sin to God. This agrees with Young's definition of “to have another mind”. We, spiritually, are a new creature that has turned from death to life. Notice the answer includes the doctrinal point that repentance and faith are inseparable.

We should also note that in all the background scriptures, Jesus described our spiritual turning from sin to God. However, let us turn back to our subject of repentance as a necessary part of the plan of salvation

The Plan of Salvation Including Repentance

To understand the above statement that repentance is a necessary part of the plan of salvation, we must understand the complete plan of salvation. Man is both a physical and a spiritual being. For this discussion, I will refer to man's spiritual being as the heart. This discussion addresses the plan of salvation from man's perspective and God's perspective in four steps as follows:

The Plan of Salvation

Man's Viewpoint

1. Understanding there is a God
2. Hearing the gospel with the heart
3. Conviction (sorrow) of the heart
4. Repentance and faith of the heart

God's Work

1. God's creation and His people
2. Spirit witnesses that gospel is true
3. Spirit works in our heart
4. Spirit regenerates

Even though described as man's perspective and God's perspective, each part is one occurrence. It is not possible to hear the gospel with our heart, without the Spirit witnessing to our heart that the gospel is true. There is no conviction or sorrow of our heart without the work of the Spirit. Finally, there is no true repentance and faith without the simultaneous and inseparable regeneration

The Plan of Salvation

Let us look at two verses that include the plan of salvation broken into the four parts as described above:

- **Acts 28:27** "...lest they should (1) see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and (2) understand with *their* heart, and should be (3 and 4) converted, and I should heal them."
- **II Cor. 7:10** – "¹⁰For (3)godly sorrow (sorrow acceptable to god) worketh (bring about) (4)repentance to salvation"

(1) WE UNDERSTAND THERE IS A GOD BY OBSERVING GOD'S CREATION AND OBSERVING GOD'S PEOPLE.

God's creations speaks of Him - Romans 1:20 – ²⁰For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

We should speak of Him - Matthew 5:16 – ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

(2) WE HEAR THE GOSPEL WITH OUR HEART THAT TELLS US WHAT WE ARE AND WHERE WE ARE GOING.

We learn what we are inside - Matt. 23:25 - ²⁵Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

We learn that we are condemned - John 3:17 – ¹⁸He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

(3) WE KNOW THAT WE DESERVE TO GO TO HELL AND WE EXPERIENCE GODLY SORROW BY THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We are guilty and feel sorrow for our guilt - Romans 3:19 – ¹⁹Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

David experienced this sorrow - Ps. 116:3 – ³The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

(4) WE COME TO REPENTANCE AND FAITH (REGENERATION)

The Holy Spirit leads or draws us each moment of the way -John 6:44 - ⁴⁴No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

We must come to the Lord - James 4:7-10 - ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded. ⁹Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Repentance is not our work. Less we believe that our repentance is a work -Eph. 2:8 - ⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

It is God's will that we should repent - II Pe. 3:9 - ⁹The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to **repentance**.

Our sins will be blotted out - Acts 3:19 - Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord

Repentance is from the heart - Rom. 10:9-11 - ⁹That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The Goodness of God leads us to repentance - Rom. 2:4 - ⁴Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to **repentance**?

David called upon the Lord and repented - Ps. 116:4 - ⁴Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

Repent one time only - Heb. 6:4-6 - ⁴For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, ⁵And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto **repentance**; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

We like Paul are sure of our salvation - II Tim. 1:12 - ¹²For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day

David tells of his experience of repentance, faith and regeneration in Ps. 116:1-9 - ¹I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications. ²Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live. ³The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. ⁴Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. ⁵Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful. ⁶The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. ⁷Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. ⁸For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling. ⁹I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION OF FAITH
ARTICLE VIII. OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH –**

We believe that

- (A) Repentance and faith are sacred duties and also inseparable graces,**
- (B) Wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby**
- (C) Being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ,**
- (D) We turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy;**
- (E) at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.**

Summary

Repentance and faith are one of the many different descriptions of salvation in the Bible, but man does not have adequate words to express the actual spiritual change that occurs in salvation.

God has given us many illustrations of salvation to share with others, but we should always remember that the understanding, sorrow and repentance of the heart of the lost person is only with the help of the Holy Spirit.