

Sermon #28

# Repentance

God is astounding, magnificent and glorious.

He is the great, kind and wise Father.

He is powerful and protective.

There is none better.

God sends us the best: His Son, the Christ.

Jesus began His earthly ministry with these words:

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent, and believe in the gospel [good news, glad tidings].”

Mark 1:15

Today, He begins His ministry to each one of us with the same plea.

**Repentance** is turning your mind to God and truth,  
and choosing to obey.

**The good news** is that the kingdom of God is near, at hand,  
within and among you. It is not a political entity or  
religious organization.

The Kingdom of God is obedience to Christ.

The only way to enter it is to repent and choose to believe Christ.

When you believe, you will follow Christ, and He will lead you in.

Repentance is not just feeling sorry or apologizing.

Nor is it going to church more often.

Nor giving a special offering.

Nor making a resolution to be more loving.

Nor giving someone a gift.

True repentance is a radical, life-changing experience that feels like death. It is not an external ritual or confession, but an internal change of command.

Repentance is dethroning myself and asking God to sit on the throne of my heart. It is death to the earthly man. Believing Christ gives birth to the new man.

True repentance usually doesn't occur until a person looks honestly at himself and realizes that he has failed in some critical area despite his best efforts to succeed.

At this moment, the soul is in the spotlight, faced with a critical choice between life and death, heaven and hell.

It is a moment of truth and opportunity.

A person who goes forward in repentance and yields himself to God finds an immediate response from God, who lovingly but firmly takes charge to whatever extent the person allows.

As soon as the person asks God what to do and listens for His reply, God gives him the first step forward to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance."

Luke 3:8

Often, he will feel that what God is telling him to do is impossible, unreasonable and/or unfair.

There may be a great temptation at this point to shrink back into a sense of familiarity and security rather than go forward in faith that God knows what is best.

This may be a point of intense pressure and pain, like a woman in labor. But your new life depends on you enduring and going through the process. After you do, you will feel great joy!

The words of Christ that many people call the "Beatitudes" reveal the essence of repentance and the fulfillment that comes through obedience to God. **{handout}**

This chart begins with Jesus' words in the first column.

The second and third columns describe the essence of repentance, and the last column tells what rewards will come as you repent and believe the good news.

Let's use the next ten minutes to silently read and prayerfully consider these things.

I emphasize to you that the chart is not something to follow legalistically or try to accomplish through your own efforts; it is meant to give you an idea of what to expect when you or someone else genuinely repents and believes.

**{wait 5-10 minutes}**

A person who chooses to repent—to return humbly, contritely and wholeheartedly to his Father—finds a wonderful reception from Him, like in the parable of the prodigal son.

Here is how that father received his repentant son:

“But when he {the son} was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. <sup>23</sup>And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; <sup>24</sup>for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

Luke 15:20

This is how our heavenly Father treats us when we repent.

There is great rejoicing in heaven,  
and He immediately restores us into loving relationship with Him.  
He gives us shelter from worldly slop and degradation and  
reestablishes us in His home, His family, His kingdom, His garden.  
But He doesn’t force us to come home, and He doesn’t force us to stay.

Genuine repentance turns us toward our home  
and to our true heritage as a child of God;  
And obedience to Christ’s guidance, one step at a time,  
keeps us securely there.

**“I AM the Lord your God,  
speaking to you through the Spirit of truth.**

**I do exist. I AM real and alive.**

**I AM always working for good.**

**You have a choice to believe Me or not.**

**If you believe, you will follow; if you don't, you won't.**

**I AM best and My way is best.**

**Repent from doubt and believe what I say!**

**Turn to Me: My truth, goodness and love.**

**You will never regret it!**

**I AM true and good. Believe in Me.**

**All horrors on earth are caused by man's failure**

**to listen to Me and believe what I say.**

**Repent and believe!"**

## The Essence of Repentance and Fulfillment

<b>Jesus said,</b>	<b>If you give up this:</b> ↓	<b>And if you turn to God, and:</b>	<b>Then your reward will be:</b>
"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."	Religious pride; trusting in your own efforts to be favored, successful, right, good	Admit your failures and weaknesses, then ask for His mercy, forgiveness, guidance and strength	Life in the Kingdom of God, now and for all eternity
"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."	Hard-heartedness, denial and repression of grief and sadness	Express your sorrow, grief and sadness	Loving comfort, reassurance and peace
"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."	Forcing your own way; arrogance; striving; exalting yourself	Imitate Christ's gentleness, humility and lowliness	Full enjoyment of God's wonderful and awesome creation
"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."	Selfish desires: greed, covetousness, lust for power over others	Desire and seek to know God's will and obey it, then follow as He leads	Complete fulfillment of your deepest needs and desires
"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."	Blaming and accusing; harshness and revenge; judging and punishing	Ask Him to forgive and to enable you to forgive; turn the other cheek	You will be shown mercy and favor and be forgiven.
"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."	Selfish motives and scheming to get what you want	Devote all you have and are to Him, to be given and shared as He guides	You will see God.
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."	Stirring up strife or attacking another person for personal gain or pleasure	Trust Him to provide for your needs and bring about perfect justice; be merciful and forgiving	You will be a reflection and expression of God, made in His image and likeness
"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."	Compromising what you know is right in an effort to get or keep what you want	Let Him guide you and enable you to stand firm as you confess and follow Christ and His teachings.	A strong, eternal personal relationship with Christ, united with Him in the abundant life in the Kingdom of God

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