

# The University Heights Messenger

December 12, 2010

## Repentance: What Is It?

By Steve Monts

I am sure we have all known of people who were zealous to turn their lives around and obey the plan of salvation, but then quickly fell away. They understood the commands to believe, repent, confess, and be baptized, or at least they thought they did. What I have often noticed is that repentance is the command they didn't understand. They didn't fully understand everything that goes into leading a repentant life.

Hebrews 6:1 tells us that repentance is a first principle so it must be understood before other aspects of Christianity. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* has this to say about repentance: "The term *metamelomai* (the Greek term we translate repent, SJM), literally signifies to have a *feeling of care, concern, or regret*. It implies a conscious, moral separation, and a personal decision to forsake sin and to enter into fellowship with God." It is employed extensively with reference to man's *turning away from sin to righteousness*. There are three aspects included in repentance: godly sorrow, turning away from sin, and turning towards God. All three elements make up the necessary command to repent. Let us look to the Bible and see how it displays all three elements.

The sorrow involved in repentance must be deep sorrow. If you are not truly sorry you will not change. "*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this*

*matter*" (2 Cor 7:10-11). Paul clearly showed that their godly sorrow would be the first step of their repentance which led to salvation and a transformed life. The emotion must be there, for you can say that you are sorry and not really be sorry. In 2 Samuel 12 David was so sorry for his sin with Bathsheba that he wrote a Psalm describing his broken and contrite heart (Ps. 51). The repentance that leads to salvation requires godly sorrow.

Repentance is not just emotion, it involves action. The sinner must turn from sin. "*Let the wicked forsake his way*" (Isa 5:7). A great example of repentance happened when many magicians heard and believed in Christ, and then they burned all their books (Acts 19:18-19). What a way to turn from sin! If we could all just burn the things that we formerly practiced that were sinful! O, let the wicked forsake his way!

But if all repentance involved were sorrow for sin and forsaking sin, what a miserable life it would be. We need the third element of repentance--turning towards God. Judas only had the first two elements. He was certainly sorry for his sin, he turned away from sin by casting the money away from himself, and, if he had to do it again, I firmly believe he would choose not to betray Christ. Judas' error was instead of turning to God, he turned to despair and committed suicide. Without the third element in repentance we would lose all hope.

We must turn to God. The Gentiles were told "*that they should repent, turn to God and do works befitting repentance*" (Acts 26:20). The Thessalonians had "*turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God*" (1 Thess 1:9). That is how we turn to God; we serve His ways. His ways are in the Bible (2 Tim 3:16-17). And if we do not turn then it is just a

matter of time until we fall. Jesus taught a parable of a man who had rid himself of his sinful ways, but put nothing in its place. His sin returned and he became worse then he was before (Matt 12:43-45). One must put God's ways in his life.

In Luke 15 we see all three elements of repentance come together. We are told of a son who wasted his livelihood in riotous living. The son became poor and wrteched to the point that he wished he could eat what swine ate. The Bible says, "*he came to himself*" and remembered how it used to be with his father. He was so sorry for his sins that he was willing to be made one of his father's servants, feeling unworthy to be his son. He forsook his ways and came home to his father. He repented as the Bible teaches. The father, while seeing him in the distance, ran out to meet him. The father didn't wait there until he came all the way but ran out to meet him. That is the great love of our God. When we, with contrite heart, turn from our sin to Him, He then reaches out to forgive willingly and with great joy. "*For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry*" (Luke 15:24). "*Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents*" (Luke 15:10).

### **IN NEED OF PRAYERS:**

**Jim Edwards** had a stint put in.

**Jeff Howerton** continues to deal with infections at Cardinal Hill. He hopes to be discharged by the 15th. Calls, cards, and visits are welcomed.

**Adam Daniels' grandmother** is receiving care after a serious fall.

**Strep throat** seems to be running through the congregation. Several are suffering with it at this point.

Our members: **Glenn Davis, Glenn Kimberlin, Janet Brundige, Harrod family, Erickson family.**

Others: **Vera Howerton, Robin Miller, Ann Sego, John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Sara Phillips, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Kay Montgomery, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Wes Kidd, Gail Stein, Shannon Gilbert, Chuck McDavitt**

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

Streaming Bible study every Tuesday at 7. This time John Thompson and I will pick up at Mark 5:1. Please remember to tell people about this effort.

Men's meeting this afternoon at 3:30.

### **BIBLE READING SCHEDULE**

**Sunday:** Jer 49, Ps 119:25-32, 2 Cor 3-4  
**Monday:** Jer 50, Ps 119:33-40, 2 Cor 5-6  
**Tuesday:** Jer 51-52, Ps 119:41-48, 2 Cor 7-8  
**Wednesday:** Lam 1, Ps 119:49-56, 2 Cor 9-10  
**Thursday:** Lam 2-3, Ps 119:57-64, 2 Cor 11-13  
**Friday:** Lam 4-5, Ps 119:65-72, Gal 1-2  
**Saturday:** Ezek 1-3, Ps 119:73-80, Gal 3-4

### **SERMON TOPICS:**

Sunday AM. Philippians: A Message Of Joy  
For Today  
(Philippians 1:1-4)

Sunday PM. Flee, Shun, Run!  
(2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Timothy 6:11; 1 Corinthians 10:14; Matthew 3:7)