

Repentance Sunday
Lead Your Church in Prayer for Repentance & Revival
PREPARATION GUIDE

Since in society we no longer talk about the subject of sin, there is little talk on sin's solution: repentance. Therefore, many are uninformed on the essential, high place repentance has in God's kingdom.

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army said, "I consider that the chief dangers which confront the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, and heaven without hell."

We must lay a foundation for a doctrine of repentance, see its priority, and practice its necessity! This is our only hope both personally and nationally.

4 Foundational Questions About Repentance

Q: What is repentance? A: A change of heart and mind that causes us to confess our sin, turn away from our sin and turn toward God.

Q: Why is repentance needed? A: Two main reasons: sin and death. Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2) and unrepentant sin leads to death (Romans 6:23).

Q: What does repentance produce? A: Forgiveness, refreshing of our spirit (Acts 3:19), life, and a restored relationship with God (Acts 11:18).

Q: How does one repent? A: Agree, turn, confess. Through the Spirit's conviction, agree with God that you are sinning (John 16:8). Turn from your sin and towards God (2 Corinthians 7:9-10). Confess your sins and verbalize it (1 John 1:8-9, James 5:16).

Note: There must be a differentiation between godly and worldly sorrow. Godly sorrow produces a turning from sin and toward God. Worldly sorrow is merely a bad feeling that you got caught.

NOTES ON REPENTANCE

I. John the Baptist

Mark 1:1-5

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."' John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins."

II. Jesus

Within Mark 1:1-5, John the Baptist emphasizes repentance, forgiveness of sins and confession. Jesus picks up where John left off (1:14-15), saying, "Repent and believe the gospel."

Mark 1:14-15 "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'"

Repentance is for all. Revelation 2-3 shows five of seven churches repenting, both sinners and saints.

Note: Jesus begins and ends his ministry with repentance.

III. The Twelve

The 12 preached repentance. Mark 6:12 "So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent."

IV. Paul

Acts 17:30 "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent..."

Note: Sharing repentance requires addressing other's wrongness.

Acts 26:19-20 "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance."

V. God's Heart - His heart cry for humanity is to repent—it is our only hope: personally, congregationally and nationally.

Jeremiah 18:7-8 "If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it."

Note: God will forgive a repenting nation (See Ninevah).

Concluding Illustration:

VI. The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:17-24 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate."

Here we see repentance in action. He comes to himself, is convicted, agrees and knows he is in sin. He turns from sin toward God and confesses.

Repentance produces forgiveness, refreshing of his spirit, life and a restored relationship with God.

Repentance is complete when the conviction of sin, the turning from sin and the confession of sin, collides with the kindness of God in a redemptive embrace.

How to Repent

By John Piper

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

A vague, bad feeling that you are a crummy person is not the same as conviction for sin. Feeling rotten is not the same as repentance.

This morning I began to pray, and felt unworthy to be talking to the Creator of the universe. It was a vague sense of unworthiness. So I told him so. Now what?

Nothing changed until I began to get specific about my sins. Crummy feelings can be useful if they lead to conviction for specific sins. But vague feelings of being a bad person are not usually very helpful.

The fog of unworthiness needs to take shape into clear dark pillars of disobedience. Then you can point to them and repent and ask for forgiveness and take aim with your gospel bazooka to blow them up.

So I began to call to mind the commands I frequently break. These are the ones that came to mind.

- Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Not 95%, but 100%. (Matthew 22:37)
- Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Be as eager for things to go well for him as you are for things to go well for you. (Matthew 22:39)
- Do all things without grumbling. No grumbling — inside or outside. (Philippians 2:14)
- Cast all your anxieties on him — so you are not being weighed down by them anymore. (1 Peter 5:7)
- Only say things that give grace to others — especially those closest to you. (Ephesians 4:29)
- Redeem the time. Don't fritter away the minutes, or dawdle. (Ephesians 5:16)

So much for any pretensions to great holiness! I'm undone.

This is much worse than vague, crummy feelings. Ah, but now the enemy is visible. The sins are specific. They've come out of hiding. I look them in the eye. I'm not whining about feeling crummy. I'm apologizing to Christ for not doing specific things that he commanded.

I'm broken, and I'm angry at my sin. I want to kill *it*, not *me*. I'm not suicidal. I'm a sin-hater and a sin-murderer. ("Put to death what is earthly in you," Colossians 3:5; "Put to death the deeds of the body," Romans 8:13.) I want to live. That's why I'm a killer — of my sin!

In this conflict, I hear the promise, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Peace rises.

Now, prayer feels possible and right and powerful again.