

REPENTANCE

"God...now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). This command is from God; and it has come to you. "Repentance" means changing one's mind. Sad to say, all men are sinners and are going the way that leads to destruction. God in His great love is commanding all men to turn right about and go towards Him, and He is willing to accept them. "...him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). "...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

1. Have you repented of all your sins? Perhaps you have heard the voice of God and have decided to repent. But have you repented of all your sins? "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James2: 10, 11). You may be willing to leave 99 sins; but there may be one sin of which you have no mind to repent; then it is as if you have not repented at all. If you truly repent, you must flee from every sin.
2. Have you realized the sinfulness of sin? Adam and Eve only ate one fruit, disobeyed God only once, and they were sent away from the Garden of Eden. Their sin may appear small to man, but it was very serious before God. You might think that only to kill is a sin, but God says, "...Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire"(Matt.5: 22), or you might think that only adultery is serious, but God says, "...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt.5:28). When God really opens your eyes you will realize how serious and abominable' all your sins are. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations" (Ezek.36: 31). Then you will cry out, "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom.7: 24). Read also -Psa.38: 3-5; Psa.51: 3,4; Isa.59:2.
3. Are you really sorry for your sins? In Luke 18: 13 we read of a man who was sorry for his sins. This man came to the Temple. but stood afar off. In this way he confessed that because of his sins he was unworthy to approach the presence of God. Do you realize how unworthy you are to come before the holy God? Secondly, he would not lift up his eyes unto heaven. He acknowledged that he was guilty before God, and worthy to be punished. He hung down his head like a guilty criminal. Have you ever acknowledged that because of your sins you deserve to be cast into the lake of fire? "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa.9: 17). Thirdly, this man smote upon his breast. Had anyone died in his house? No. but he was full of sorrow for his own sins. You have shed many tears because of pain, sorrow or disappointment. But have you shed one tear before God, being sorry for your sins? Fourthly, he prayed saying, God be merciful to mea sinner". He came believing that he would receive mercy from God. "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Psa.86: 5). Have you called upon the Lord and obtained His mercy?

4. Have you brought forth the fruits of repentance? It is possible that you have repented, and God knows all about it. But should not men also have the evidence of it? The Lord Jesus said, "...by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt.7:20). When you see mangoes on a tree, then you know it is a mango tree. So also when people see the fruits of repentance in you they will know that you have repented. Have you made peace with all your enemies? Have you asked forgiveness from all whom you have offended? Have you returned the articles you have stolen? Have you decided to pay back all your debts, even though you have to make much sacrifice in order to do so? Have you given up your bad habits? Are you controlling your tongue and temper in the fear of God? Are you praying for your enemies without retaliating evil for evil?
5. Do you realize that you were born in sin? "And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt.3: 9). You cannot say you are different from other people because you are born in a godly family. "...for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom.3: 22,23). Even David says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa.51: 5). "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer .13:23). We are all born with a sinful nature. By birth we are a generation of vipers (Matt.3:7). We have committed such abominable sins that the Lord had to say to us all, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). This was our terrible condition! But thank God, it is not so now. When we repented of our sins, He freely forgave us, cleansed us from all our sins, and has made our bodies the temple of the Holy Spirit. Notwithstanding you have to remember that when you were born to your mother you were born in sin; this body of yours is a "body of sin" (Rom.6:6), and a "body of death" (Rom.7:24); this body will be left in the grave and can never go to heaven (1 Cor.15:42-44).
6. Do you realize that Christ had to be crucified for your sins? Our sins were so great that you and I de served to be crucified. But Christ took our place and died for our sins (Rom.5:8). We have done wicked and sinful deeds with our hands, and they deserve to be pierced with nails. We have used our feet to move with sinful motives, and they deserve to be nailed to the cross. Our whole body has been defiled with sin and deserves to be beaten with whips. Our faces have been proud and stubborn and we deserve to be spat upon our faces. Our heads have been full of selfish and unholy thoughts and we deserve a crown of thorns. But Jesus took your place and mine and suffered everything for you and me. Perhaps you think that the Roman soldiers crucified Him. But actually because of your sins, you have crucified Him. Have you realized this fact? (Acts 2:36,37).
7. Have you turned away from all your sins? "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov.28:13). When you truly repent of all your sins, you will be filled with hatred for sin and love for righteousness. There are seven results, which the

Holy Spirit will work in you (See 2 Cor.7:10,11). You will be filled with a desire to be very careful that you should never fall into your old ways again, like a dog returning to his vomit, and a washed sow to its wallowing in the mire (2 Peter 2:22). You will have a great desire to set right all your past sins and to clear yourself of any guilt or blame that had come upon you because of your past sins. You will be filled with hatred, aversion and indignation against those very same 'sins which you once loved and enjoyed and longed for. You will also be filled with fear that God may punish you severely if you willfully fall into the same sins after coming to the knowledge of the truth. You will now have a vehement desire to lead a life of absolute holiness, and live a life which is well pleasing to the Saviour Who has redeemed you by His own precious blood. You will now have zeal and joyful longing to do acts of righteousness and service to the Lord. Also you will determine to take revenge (in a holy sense) on the enemy by not only overcoming your temptations but also by entering into the enemy's territory and obtaining spoil by working for the salvation of those who are still in his bondage.

Finally, you have to repent also of every idea that you can please God through anything good in you. You are a leper. You have the leprosy of sin, which is incurable by man. You need the Lord's touch to be healed by Him. Till now, you are only an unclean thing and all your works of righteousness are only filthy rags before God (Isa.64:6). Unless and until you are healed, your service to God, such as singing, giving offerings, even preaching and praying, are all alike entirely useless and unacceptable to God. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord...When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? ...the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting...yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean" (Isa.1 :11-16).

God wants to give you the gift of everlasting life so that you can become a member of God's family. Unless you receive that gift you are dead in your sins, and even what you think to be your good works, are only dead works before God. These dead works cannot give you salvation. Have you turned away from them to trust in the finished work of salvation which the Lord Jesus accomplished for you upon the Cross of Calvary? Instead of saying, "I am trusting in my good life, my good works and my good gifts for my salvation", can you say, "I am trusting only in this that although I deserve the wrath of God and the everlasting punishment, Christ died for my sins and therefore I am free?"

Dear friend, repent of all your sins sincerely, so that your tender heart may become like good ground where the seed of God's Word may be sown and bring forth thirty fold, sixty fold and hundred fold fruit.