

Lesson #2

REPENTING

... Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.

Matthew 3:2

- I. What is repentance?**
 - a. To have a change of mind**
 - b. The place of repentance being in faith and salvation**
- II. The purpose of repentance - for the kingdom of the heavens**
- III. How to repent - with all our being and our heart**
- IV. Two aspects of repenting**
 - a. Of sins, wrongdoings, the world, and the world's corruption**
 - b. Turn to God for His purpose**
- V. Three basic aspects of a Christian life**
 - a. To turn from idols to God**
 - b. To serve a living and true God**
 - c. To await His Son from the heavens**
- VI. Repentance in our daily Christian walk**

Repenting

Matthew 3:2 And saying, **Repent**, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.

- **Repent**

To repent is to have a change of mind issuing in regret, to have a turn in purpose.

- kingdom

In John the Baptist's preaching, repentance, as the opening of God's New Testament economy, involved making a turn for the kingdom of the heavens.

THE PLACE OF REPENTANCE BEING IN FAITH AND SALVATION

How then is man saved? The Gospel of John tells us clearly that it is by faith. The books of Romans and Galatians also tell us clearly that it is by faith. Galatians tells us that it is only by faith. In the whole New Testament, there are only these three books that deal with the question of salvation. All three books tell us that salvation is by faith only and is not of the law. Repentance does not come into consideration. What place then does repentance hold? If we read the Bible, we will find out that repentance is never detached from faith. Repentance is never separated from faith. This does not mean that one is saved by faith and repentance. Repentance is included in faith and is included in salvation already. When a man believes in the Lord Jesus, the element of repentance is included there already. If one says that he is saved, then his salvation includes repentance. Repentance is never detached from faith. It is always included in salvation.

Another verse tells us that repentance is not only related to faith but is related to salvation as well. **Acts 5:31** says, "This One God has exalted to His right hand as Leader and

Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." We see here that repentance is given by God in the same way that forgiveness is given by God. In the Bible a few times repentance and forgiveness are joined together. **Acts 2** says that repentance is for the forgiveness of sins (**v. 38**). **Acts 3** says that repentance results in our sins being wiped away (**v. 19**).

Matthew 3:3 For this is he who was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, "A voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight His paths."

- Prepare

The way, similar to a street, and the paths, similar to lanes, are a portrait of man's heart with all its parts. To repent unto the Lord with our whole being and with our whole heart is to let the Lord come in to prepare the way of the Lord. To allow the Lord to further occupy every part of our heart, including the mind, the emotion, and the will, is to make straight the paths of the Lord. Hence, to prepare the way of the Lord and make His paths straight is to change our mind, to turn our mind toward the Lord and make our heart right, that through repentance every part and avenue of our heart may be straightened by the Lord for the kingdom of the heavens (Luke 1:16-17).

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near. **Repent** and believe in the gospel.

- **Repent**

The Greek word means *have a change of mind*. To repent is to have a change of mind with regret for the past and a turn for the future. On the negative side, to **repent** before God is not only to repent of sins and

Verses

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1 Thessalonians 1:9

For they themselves report concerning us what kind of entrance we had toward you and how you turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God

Acts 5:31

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wrongdoings but also to repent of the world and its corruption, which usurp and corrupt people whom God created for Himself, and to repent of our God-forsaking life in the past. On the positive side, it is to turn to God in every way and in everything for the fulfillment of His purpose in creating man. It is a “**repentance** unto God,” and is to “**repent and turn to God**” (Acts 20:21; 26:20).

1 Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves report concerning us what kind of entrance we had toward you and how you turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God

- turned

To turn to God from the idols, to serve a living and true God, and to await His Son from the heavens are the three basic substances of the Christian life as viewed from another angle. To turn to God from the idols is to turn away not only from the false gods, together with the devil and the demons behind them, but also from all things other than God. This is accomplished by faith infused into the new converts through their hearing of the word of the gospel. To serve a living and true God is to serve the very God who is triune — the Father, the Son, and the Spirit — who has been processed to be the believers’ life and life supply for their enjoyment. They should experience Him not only as the object of worship but also as the all-inclusive Supplier who lives in them. This experience is brought about by love produced within the believers by the sweet taste of the rich supply of the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. To await the Son of God from the heavens is to look for the One who passed through incarnation, human living, and crucifixion and entered into resurrection and ascended to the heavens, and who will come back to receive His believers into glory. This is the hope that strengthens the believers to stand steadfastly in their faith.

Acts 5:31 This One God has exalted to His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

- repentance

Repentance is for forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4). On God’s side, forgiveness of sins is based on Christ’s redemption (Eph. 1:7); on man’s side, forgiveness of sins is through man’s **repentance**.

DO YOU KEEP YOUR REPENTING PRAYER CONTINUOUSLY?

Repenting prayer is a particular kind of prayer that we must keep continuously. If there is any prayer without repenting, that prayer is nearly in vain. Medical doctors tell us that we should always wash our hands before eating. In the same way, we should not pray without repenting. Praying without repenting is like eating without washing our hands. Even if we do not lose our temper or speak evil words, we are still sinful. So when we come to pray, to take the spiritual food, we have to wash our hands, and to wash our hands is to repent. We should say, “Lord, I still need Your forgiveness, and I still need Your cleansing with Your precious blood.” Then we can pray. After our hands are washed, we can eat.

If you ask how many times we should repent and confess, the answer is that the number of times is countless. We need to repent and confess throughout the day and every day. In a general way, we should first pray, “Lord, I still need Your forgiveness of grace. I still need Your cleansing with Your blood. Lord, particularly, I need Your forgiveness for my not walking strictly in the spirit for the whole day.” This is a particular confession. Sometimes at the end of the day, we may recall that we were not according to the spirit in certain matters. Romans 8:4 says that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who walk according to the spirit. Do you have the assurance that all day you do everything in the spirit? You must understand that no one can do this. But you can pray a prayer of repentance. No one can always keep his hands thoroughly clean, but he can wash his hands. We need a continuous washing in the precious blood of Christ (1 John 1:7).

(Based on footnotes in the New Testament Recovery Version, published by Living Steam Ministry.)