

Repentance – is Essential for True Salvation!

Introduction: All of my Christian life I have had a heart for leading people into the saving knowledge and experience of salvation in Christ. I am concerned that many today are being erroneously taught that forgiveness of sins is attainable without “repentance.” The Old and New Testaments both teach “repentance” as a prerequisite for salvation. Some teach today that “belief” in Christ as the Savior is the “only” thing needed for forgiveness of sin. The word “Repentance” is rarely seen in most bible salvation plans in print. This is not biblical and is leading many into a false belief they will go to heaven just by believing in the person of Jesus Christ. Their lifestyle has not changed one bit. The fact of the matter is, the OT word “repent” means “to be sorry” and the NT word means “to think differently.” One cannot be saved without wanting to “change their life.” They must be “sorry” for the sins of the past and desire a “change” in their sinful behavior. Let’s see what the Bible teaches about true salvation.



False Belief #1 – *Believing in Christ is ALL that is needed to be forgiven of our sins.*

The Truth: If this were true, the devil himself would go to heaven, because He “believes” in Christ. John the Baptist and Jesus himself, along with the disciples introduced the Kingdom of Heaven/God with the call to “repentance.” Matt. 3:1,2; Matt.4:17; Mark 1:15; Mark 6:12. If “believing” was all that was necessary, why did their message begin with “Repent” instead of “believe”? (True Salvation includes: **Repentance** and “being sorry and wanting to change”, **Believing** in the substitutionary death of Christ, **Confessing** past sin, and **Receiving**, inviting Christ into one’s life.) Repentance, is the first ingredient necessary for true salvation. Without repentance there is no change in behavior.

False Belief #2 - Christian Baptism alone is a “Sacrament” that will save you.”

The Truth: “**Repentance**” always preceded Christian baptism.” Acts 2:38; Acts 26:20
Spiritual fruit (godly lifestyle) is the evidence of “repentance” and true salvation. If one is continuing to live an unrestrained “lifestyle” of sinful behavior they have not truly repented.
1John 3:9 One can be baptized without desiring to live a God honoring new life.

False Belief #3 - If one Confesses their sins regularly they are forgiven.

The Truth: Once we repent, confess and acknowledge our sins, God forgives us. It is important to understand the difference between “repentance” and “confession.” I can confess, or admit, a sin that I have no intentions of quitting. We as Christians do have “sin” in our lives. Once the Holy Spirit reveals the hidden sin to us, we have an obligation to “turn from it” and receive God’s sustaining power to leave that sin behind. 1John 1:7

The devil is the one who says that we can continue in our sins without spiritual consequences. He is liar. Genesis 3:4; 1John 1:6; 1 John 3:7; Rev. 2:5 Since the devil cannot stop us from becoming Christians, his next best tactic is to try to get us to live a life of sin. If all we do is confess our sins over and over, without repentance, we will never experience victory in that area of our lives. The devil scores “big wins” when the unsaved continue to believe that Christians are “hypocrites” and they are no different than the non-Christian. Sin in the life of a believer always hinders the “witness” and weakens their “testimony” to the non-believer.

In the last days Jesus said there would be many false teachers in the church. Be careful not to follow any teacher who says you can continue to live in sin and go to heaven. Matt. 7:21; 1John 2:4

The Holy Spirit of God will lead you into all truth as you read the Word of God and keep your heart tender to His speaking. The Holy Spirit has promised to lead you into all truth. John 16:13; 1John 2:26, 27

False Belief #4 - Repentance is a “One-Time” act.

The Truth: Some teach that repentance is something you do only at the beginning of your Christian life. Actually, “repentance” is not a one-time act, but is a “way of life” for the Christian. Every Christian has “unknown” areas of sin I call “blind spots”. These blind spots are blind to us until the Holy Spirit shows them to us. Once we become “aware” of these sins we need to “repent” of them as well as “confess”, or acknowledge them before God. 1John 1:6-10

Serving in Africa and preaching in ten countries there, I have experienced first hand the issue of Christians there not being taught the importance of “walking in the light” as the scriptures teach Christ followers to do. There is a level of “known, and unrepentant sin” in the life of so many “pastors and leaders” that Christ’s message of real life-change and victory is hindered greatly.

God cannot bless as He desires in a culture of deceit and corruption. As Christians we expect the unsaved world to live lives of dishonesty, but nowhere in God’s Word does God allow for known, willful, transgressions of His laws of honesty and integrity among His people.

My plea to all leaders and pastors is to LIVE LIVES OF RADICAL OBEDIENCE! This will, as nothing else can, transform your life, your churches, and your country. Start today will “repenting” before God of the “known sinful issues” in your own life, and then admonish your congregations to do the same. You could be the one who sparks a national revival!

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