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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Luke 15:18-21
Lesson #11
The Prodigal's Return
12/08/2019

Repentance is a process that is occasioned by **rebellion** resulting in **pain** leading to **insight** initiating **commitment** culminating in **action**.

Repentance is about what is happening inside us, not outside, around, or through us.

Repentance

vs. 11-13 vs. 14-16 vs. 17 vs. 18-19 vs. 20-21

The Prodigal Son
Luke 15

Peace

Action

Commitment

Insight

Pain

Independence

1

Luke 15

“18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.’”

20 And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’”


2

Repentance is recognized **not** after:

Insight

Repentance is recognized **only** after:

Action



3

Matthew 3:8

“Therefore **bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance**,”

Acts 26:20

“I . . . kept declaring that they should repent and turn to God, **performing deeds appropriate to repentance**.”

Repentance is **notarized** by:

- **“direction”** change
- **“deeds”** performed.

4

Repentance can be derailed BEFORE spiritual insight.

“shame”

leading to isolation, depression and

death



“blame”

leading to bitterness, social conflict and

death

5

Repentance can be derailed **BEFORE** spiritual insight.

2 Corinthians 4

“³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case **the god of this world has blinded the minds** of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

2 Corinthians 7:10

“For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but **the sorrow of the world produces death.**”

6

Repentance can be derailed **AFTER** spiritual insight.

“religion”

Idolatry - the kingdom before its time and without its King.

death



**“under”
the Law**

Measuring our security by our works and our orthodox faith.

death



7

Repentance can be derailed **AFTER** spiritual insight.

Luke 9:62

“No one who puts a hand to the plow **and looks back** is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

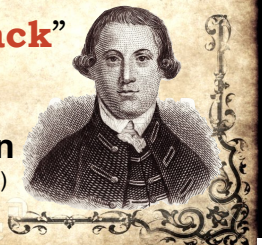
Hebrews 6:1

“Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us **press on to maturity**, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.”

8

“Some often repent, yet never reform; they resemble a man traveling in a dangerous path, who frequently starts and stops, (looks back)
but never turns back”

Bonnell Thornton
(poet, essayist, 1725-1768)



9

“¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”

“I”

It’s about **OUR** response, not **OUR** circumstances.

“will”

It’s about what we **PLAN** to do next.

“I have sinned”

It’s about taking **RESPONSIBILITY** for sin as sin, not about “watering down” the offense.

“against heaven, and in your sight”

It’s about the **RELATIONSHIP** with God and others more than the rules.

10

“¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”

“I am no longer worthy to be called your son”

It’s about the pain we **CAUSED** not only the pain we endured.

“make me as one of your hired men”

It’s about a willingness to accept the **CONSEQUENCES** of our behavior not demanding grace.

11

"²⁰ And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'"

"he got up and came to his father"
**It's not only about WHAT we leave
but also about WHERE we go.**

"came to his father"
**The FOCUS is on the father and home
not the distant country.**

12

Confessional mistake #1

Minimizing the issue

- "I'm sorry, I slipped up."

translation

"This is no big deal. It is a minor offense that would not upset normal people."

- "I could have handled that in a better way."

translation

"I made a poor choice. This is a style issue not a spiritual / moral issue."

13

Big mistake #2

Adding insult to injury.

- "I'm sorry IF I offended you."

translation

"You hypersensitive emotional cripple, if you weren't so touchy this would not have been a problem."

- "Let me EXPLAIN what happened."

translation

"Anyone will excuse me once they see the context, which will remove or at least minimize my culpability."

14

Big mistake #3

Feeling your pain more than theirs.

- "I feel so embarrassed and ashamed."

translation

"It's all about MY image. My public reputation is ruined."

- "How do you think I feel?"

translation

"My feelings are the issue. I am not really concerned with how it affected you."

15

Big mistake #4

Self justification or tit for tat

- "You started this whole thing."

translation

"I'm sorry I lowered myself to your level. If you don't like it then don't start it."

- "I'm sorry, I'm not perfect."

translation

"Your expectations are out of line. If you were more gracious and tolerant this would not be an issue."

16

Big mistake #5

Demanding forbearance or forgiveness.

- "I know you understand."

translation

"This is no big deal. You can surely absorb this mistake."

- "Was this a problem for you?"

translation

"I am surprised that you were so easily offended. Gracious people would overlook this."

17

Two common mistakes

1. Expecting God to bankroll us in a distant land, **rather than call us out of the distant land.**
2. Assuming that confessing our sins is enough **rather than changing our spiritual address.**



18

“American spirituality can be reduced to moralistic, therapeutic, deism . . . that sees the human dilemma as dysfunction more than sin, with Jesus as a life coach that leads us to a better marriage, happier kids, and greater success in our race for the American dream.”

Christian Smith
(Sociologist)



19

Are we living in a Distant Land?

Do we take our **baptism** seriously?

- Do we view our place in this world as entitled land owners or **alien ambassadors**?
- Do we **petition and expect God** to bless our lives in a distant land?
- Do we seek “false” security in our **ethics and orthodoxy** while in a distant land?
- Do we **attach ourselves** to the false hopes of a distant land? (temporal, material, circumstantial, political, social, etc.)



20

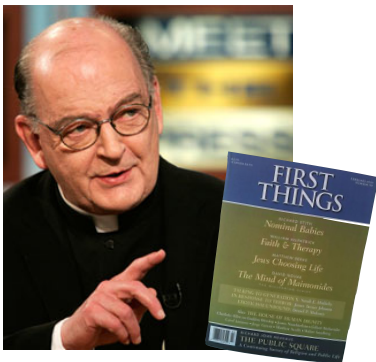
Repentance means - **leaving some things behind**

- Not just the pain and disappointments **but also an agenda, expectations, pain killers, dreams, attachments etc.**

Repentance means - **changing priorities**

- From secular cultural reform **to authentic spiritual community.**
- From sensual “religious experiences” **to deep spiritual maturity.**
- From material riches **to spiritual wealth.**

21



Richard John
Neuhaus

“Idolatry is trying to bring in God’s Kingdom before its time and without its King.”

It is seen within both the political left and right.

22

The Prodigal's profile *Matthew 5:3-12*

- Before repentance**
- “Blessed are the **poor in spirit**” – They are aware of their dark side and its deadly effects.
 - “Blessed are those who **mourn**” – They are in pain for their condition.
 - “Blessed are the **meek**” – They are stripped of their pride.
 - “Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**” – They long for a righteousness that they cannot achieve in the flesh.
- After repentance**
- “Blessed are the **merciful**” – They realize that others need grace as they themselves do.
 - “Blessed are the **pure in heart**” – They are not double minded seeking to have it both ways.
 - “Blessed are the **peacemakers**” – They bring people together.
 - “Blessed are the **persecuted**” – They suffer for righteousness.

23

Romans 12

"1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And **do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

3 For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, [let each exercise them accordingly]: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; 11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, 13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath [of God]; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

24



10 Commandments of "I'm sorry" from the Prodigal Son

1. Don't "check out" or run away. What you do and what you say are both critical, going forward.
2. Take the initiative in both word and deed.
3. Go to the right person(s).
4. Empathize with those offended.
5. Get to the point.
6. Explanations will sound like excuses.
7. Spell out what you feel you deserve.
8. Be willing to make restitution.
9. Be willing to suffer the consequences.
10. Keep it up as long as necessary.

25

Never say "I love you"
if you don't really care.

Never talk of feelings
if they aren't really there.

Never hold my hand
if you're gonna break my heart.

Never say you're going to...
if you don't intend to start.

Never look into my eyes
if all you do is lie.

Never say "hello"
if you really mean "goodbye."

God 26