

## “Repentance Leading to Salvation”

2 Corinthians 7:8-12

### I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** True repentance is absolutely necessary for salvation:

A. The overriding theme of I Corinthians was the rebuke of sin and error:

- (1) Chapters 1-3: sectarianism
- (2) Chapter 5: immorality in the church
- (3) Chapter 6: taking brethren to court
- (4) Chapter 7: problems concerning marriage
- (5) Chapter 8: violating a weak brother conscience
- (6) Chapter 9: self-denial
- (7) Chapter 10: fleeing idolatry
- (8) Chapter 11: the head covering and abuses of the Lord's Supper
- (9) Chapters 12 & 13: spiritual gifts

B. Paul follows up the first letter with a second commending the Corinthian brethren for their repentance (**2 Cor. 7:10**: “*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*”).

2. What is repentance? change of heart leading to change of action, change the course of one's life.

A. Through inspiration, Paul describes two types of “sorrow”:

- (1) “sorrow of the world” → regret → “death” (Judas; **Matt. 27:3-4**: “*Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’*”)
- (2) “godly sorrow” → “repentance” → correction of sin and error → “salvation”

B. I'm convinced of all the things God tells us to do; repentance is the hardest.

C. But, His Word leaves no doubt that we must repent! **Acts 17:30-31**: “*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*”

3. **3** Therefore, we must study true repentance: the necessity of it, the nature of it, the result of it, and that we must not be hypocritical when we repent.

### II. DISCUSSION:

1. **4** The necessity of repentance:

A. Repentance prepared Jews to receive Jesus:

- (1) Preaching of John: **Matt. 3:1-2**: “*In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’*”
- (2) Preaching of Jesus: **Mk. 1:14-15**: “*Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’*”

B. Alien sinners outside of Christ only receive salvation in the “Gospel Age” if they repent:

(1) Pentecostians:

- (a) They were guilty of murder: **Acts 2:22-23:** “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know — 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death”
- (b) Peter proves “Jesus of Nazareth” was “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:24-36).
- (c) They ask, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).
- (d) The answer: **Acts 2:38:** “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

(2) Repentance a prominent and continuing theme in the salvation of the alien sinner:

Acts 3:13: again guilty of murdering Jesus; therefore: **Acts 3:19:** “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,”

C. Repentance also a necessity for Christians who sin to receive forgiveness: **Acts 8:22:**

“Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.”

2. **5** The nature of repentance:

A. Psa. 51 records David’s fervent plea for pardon:

(1) Vv. 1-2 Plea for mercy and pardon:

**Psa. 51:1-2:** “Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.”

(2) Vv. 3-6 Full confession of sin, because God seeks truth in the inner man:

**Psa. 51:3-6:** “For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight — That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.”

(3) Vv. 7-12 Plea for pardon, renewed fellowship with God:

**Psa. 51:7-12:** “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”

(4) Vv. 13-17 Promise to teach others and praise God as sacrifices of true repentance:

**Psa. 51:13-17:** “Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You. 14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. 16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt

offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart — These, O God, You will not despise.”

(5) Vv. 18-19 Plea for Zion:

**Psa. 51:18-19:** “Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.”

B. Psa. 139:23-24 Plea for God to search his heart:

**Psa. 139:23-24:** “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.”

C. Psa. 19:12-14 Plea to God to cleanse and guard his thoughts, words, and deeds:

**Psa. 19:12-14:** “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. 13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.”

D. The repentant soul is described well in **Isaiah 66:2:** “But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.”

3. **6** The difficulty of repentance:

A. Sin can have a tremendously strong grip! **Rom. 7:15:** “For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.”

B. Paul was keenly aware of that fact:

**1 Cor. 9:24-27:** “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

C. The Hebrew writer addresses this important problem and in doing so tells us the solution:

**Heb. 12:1-2:** “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

D. We must repent, God requires it!

**Acts 17:30:** “...God...now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” (Lk. 13:3)

E. That being the case He gives us the tools to overcome:

(1) The grand promise concerning temptation:

**1 Cor. 10:13:** “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

(2) The grand promise if we fail:

**1 Jn. 1:7-9:** “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

**1 Jn. 2:1:** “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

**Acts 8:22:** “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.”

F. We need to come to hate sin as God hates it!

(1) Remind ourselves of the price that had to be paid for sin (**1 Pet. 1:18:** “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,”).

(2) Pray for help! (**Heb. 4:15-16:** “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”).

(3) Trust in God’s power! (**Eph. 3:20:** “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,”).

(4) If we fail, God will forgive us! 1 Jn. 1:9; Acts 8:22; cf. Matt. 18:22

#### 4. **7** The time for repentance:

A. It’s very simple: “Today” is always the “day of salvation”: **2 Cor. 6:2:** “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

**Heb. 3:13:** “but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

B. Only a fool would put repentance off to another day: **Prov. 27:1:** “Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.”

C. However, many procrastinate.

**Isa. 55:6-7:** “Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.”

**Rom. 13:14:** “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

#### 5. **8** The result of repentance:

A. A change of heart that produces the fruit of a changed life.

(1) Consider John’s message to Jews: **Matt. 3:8:** “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,”

(2) Paul’s message to Jew and Gentile: **Acts 26:20:** “but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”

B. An example of repentance is found in the lives changed by the gospel at Corinth:

(1) Sinners converted from the world: **1 Cor. 6:9-11**: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. **11 And such were some of you.** But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

(2) Erring Christians corrected: **2 Cor. 7:9-11**: “Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. **10** For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. **11** For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”

Recall: Godly sorrow → repentance → correct sin & error

C. God calls all men to change their hearts and lives: **Titus 2:11-14**

D. The result of true repentance is great, genuine, and results in visible changes in people's lives.

(1) Living in ungodliness and worldly lusts—**repent—washed, sanctified, justified**—live soberly, righteously, godly.

(2) Some were: fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners (**1 Cor. 6:11**: “*And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*”).

(3) Some: selfish, proud, envious, hateful, bitter

(4) Some: dishonest, gambling

(5) Some: fits of anger, cursing, lying, telling rumors

(6) Some: abuse drugs, social drinking, addicted to tobacco

(7) Some: dancing, looking at pornography, wearing immodest dress

(8) Some: follow false religions and false teachers

(9) Some: forsaking worship assemblies

(10) Some: “*and such like*” (Gal. 5:21)

E. A final note on bearing “*fruits worthy of repentance*” (Matt. 3:8).

(1) Bearing such fruit means “visible change.”

(2) It means making amends when necessary and possible (**Lk. 19:8**: “*Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.’*”).

(3) What would constitute bearing “*fruits worthy of repentance*”? \*\*

☛ Kidnapping? Keep the one kidnapped?

☛ Theft? Keep the money stolen?

☛ Adulterous marriage? Remain in the adulterous marriage?

☛ Murder? We can't restore life!

6. **9** No hypocritical repentance:

A. Jesus scathingly rebuked hypocritical religious leaders:

**Matt. 3:7-9:** *“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.”*

B. Jesus levels even stronger rebukes to hypocritical religious people: **Matt. 23:25-28**

(1) Created reputation for being very religious: made outside appear clean.

(2) True character was another matter: the inside was full of all kinds of sin and hypocrisy.

(3) True repentance changes us from the inside out!

(4) How many will be lost because they are turned off by hypocritical “Christians”? **Rev.**

**21:8:** *“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”*

### III. CONCLUSION: **10**

1. True repentance is necessary for salvation (Acts 17:30).

2. It involves a change of heart that leads to change of life:

A. “sorrow of the world” → regret → “death” (Judas; Matt. 27:3-4)

B. “godly sorrow” → “repentance” → correction of sin and error → “salvation” (2 Cor. 7:10)

3. Sinners outside of Christ must repent to receive salvation: Acts 2:22-23, 36-38

4. Christians who sin must repent to receive forgiveness: Acts 8:22-23 (repent, pray)

5. The blood of Christ cleanses only if we truly repent!

6. True repentance produces “fruits worthy of repentance” (Matt. 3:8). You can’t keep the stolen money! You can’t remain in the adulterous marriage! You can’t continue to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together”! etc.

Adapted from a sermon (*True Repentance*) by Ron Halbrook.