

12-16-2018

Message: Jesus said, “Repent or Perish”

Text: Luke 13:1-9

Introduction

- A. Along with the coming of Jesus came His prophet, John the Baptist, preparing the people Israel to receive Jesus as their promised Messiah. With what words did John begin his preaching ministry? What words would prepare the people to receive Jesus as their Messiah?

Matthew 3:1 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ² "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**"

- B. When Jesus’s public ministry soon followed John’s, with what words did Jesus begin His preaching ministry?

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**"

- C. Today some would argue that “repentance” is among the least used words in the Christian church today. It stands to reason that if sin against God is being downplayed as a mistake, an illness, is ignored or even called righteousness or God’s genetic design, then it follows that the need to repent from sin would rarely if ever be mentioned.

- D. Yet Jesus makes clear that both knowing what repentance is and actually practicing repentance is essential to being a Christian. One cannot be a Christian, one cannot be His disciple, one cannot be forgiven of sin and inherit eternal life without repentance, for as Jesus repeats in our text ...

Luke 13:3 "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**

Luke 13:5 "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**"

- E. The Hebrew word “shuv” = to turn/return is the word we translate “repent” in the context of turning from sin and turning/returning to the Lord. This is what repentance is - turning from sin to the Lord.

1 Kings 8:46 "**When they sin against You** (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near; ⁴⁷ if they take thought in the land where they have been taken captive, and **repent (shuv)** and make supplication to You in the land of those who have taken them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and have committed iniquity, we have acted wickedly'; ⁴⁸ if they **return (shuv) to You** with all their heart and with all their soul

- D. At the end of chapter 12 last week we saw Jesus rebuking the hypocrisy of the Israelite crowd for knowing how to analyze the time to prepare for the coming of storms and heat waves, but being unable to analyze that now is the present time to settle accounts with God in preparation for the coming storm of His burning judgment upon the world.
- E. So chapter 13:1-9 appropriately follows with Jesus graciously warning us of our urgent need to repent now.

I. Luke 13:1-5 The Lord requires repentance from all sinners.

- A. 13:1-3 A questioner asks Jesus's thoughts on the massacre of Galileans by the Roman governor, Pilate.

1. There is no other account of this massacre by Pilate, the governor of Judea appointed by Rome.

Luke 13:1 **Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.**

2. A mindset held by many, whether Job's comforters or Jesus's own disciples, was that tragedy indicated sin in a person's life. Bad things happen to bad people, not to good people.

Job 8:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, ... ⁴ **"If your sons sinned against Him, then He delivered them into the power of their transgression. ... ⁶ If you are pure and upright, surely now He would rouse Himself for you and restore your righteous estate.**

John 9:1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, **"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"**

3. But Jesus both refutes this assumption and raises a most important reality: there is a threat of a tragic end far more disastrous than mortal death. It is the reality of the looming disaster of eternal death for **all** people who remain unresponsive to Jesus, for all who fail to respond to Jesus in repentance and faith. Without repentance, no one escapes eternal death.

Luke 13:2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were *greater* sinners than all *other* Galileans because they suffered this *fate*? ³ "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**

- B. 13:4-5 While the first tragedy might have been brought on the Galileans by their own conduct, the second tragedy cannot likely be assigned to the actions of those who suddenly perished in the tower collapse.

Luke 13:4 "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were *worse* culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?"⁵ "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

1. Shiloam (also called Shiloah, Isaiah 8:6) was a reservoir for Jerusalem, located near the intersection of the southern and eastern walls of the city. There is no other record of this incident.
2. Whether what is called an act of man or an act of God, all such tragedies, including our own deaths (1 Peter 4:6), are intermediate judgments on a fallen world, serving as warnings, foreshadowing God's final judgment to come. So it is critical to both know what repentance is and to practice it.

II. Six biblical marks of true repentance.

- A. It would appear from the Scriptures that repentance involves more than simply saying "I've sinned," or feeling remorse. Judas, who betrayed Jesus, exhibited these things and ended up in hell.

Matthew 27:3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,⁴ saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See *to that* yourself!"⁵ And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

- B. So how does God's Word teach us to know if we have truly turned, truly repented of our sin? A brother in Christ who is no longer with us, English pastor Thomas Watson (1620-1686), observed in the Scriptures that the repentance the Lord accepts from us has the following six ingredients.

1. Ingredient #1 - Sight of sin

- a. If we don't see our sin, if we don't come to our senses and recognize our hostility to Christ, then we will have no inclination to repent. Solomon recognized sight of sin as a first step in repentance when he prayed, "if they take thought" which literally in Hebrew is "if they turn (shuv) to their hearts" (a picture of introspection)

1 Kings 8:46 "When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near;⁴⁷ if they take thought in the land where they have been taken captive, and repent [shuv]

- b. The first step in the repentance of the prodigal son in Luke 15 was that he came to his senses.

Luke 15:17 "**But when he came to his senses**, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!' 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;**

- c. When Christ calls us to be His witnesses, as He did to His apostle Paul, He calls us to be His instruments to open blind eyes to the darkness of their sin and to the brilliance of Christ's glory - so they will "turn" from darkness to light.

Acts 26:17 ... I am sending you, ¹⁸ **to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light** and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

2. Ingredient #2 - Sorrow for sin

- a. Unlike the sorrow of the world that leads to death (like Judas's sorrow), there is a sorrow that God wills us to have, for it leads us to repentance.

2 Corinthians 7:9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that **you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance;** for **you were made sorrowful according to the will of God,** so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 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.

- b. The woman in Luke 7 who was a notorious sinner illustrates such godly sorrow over sin that led her to repentance, and she received forgiveness of her sins from Jesus.

Luke 7:37 And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining *at the table* in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, ³⁸ and standing behind *Him* at His feet, **weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears,** and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. ... ⁴⁸ Then He said to her, "**Your sins have been forgiven ... Your faith has saved you; go in peace.**"

- (1) Thomas Watson rightly commented, "The sorrow of her heart flowed out of her eyes." The sorrow of the heart that is according to God's will comes from a heart that loves Jesus, and is therefore grieved at how we have dishonored, denied, rebelled, acted lovelessly toward him.

Luke 7:44 Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet

My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.⁴⁵ "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet.⁴⁶ "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume.⁴⁷ **"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."**

- (2) It was his love for Jesus that caused Peter to weep so bitterly after he came to his senses and realized he had just denied Jesus three times.

Luke 22:61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And **Peter remembered the word of the Lord**, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times."⁶² **And he went out and wept bitterly.**

- (3) It was Judas's love for himself, focus on himself that caused him such suicidal depression. My performance in my eyes (what does this make me?), my performance in other people's eyes (what will people think of me?) were likely among the idols of his heart. When Nathan confronted king David with his sin of adultery and murder, bringing David to his senses, David's focus was not on himself, but on the Lord he loved.

Psalms 51:4 **Against You, You only, I have sinned** and done what is evil **in Your sight**,

3. Ingredient #3 - Confession of sin

- a. We see in the Scriptures examples of people confessing sin with insincere hearts, who receive no forgiveness from the Lord.

Exodus 9:27 Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "**I have sinned this time**; the LORD is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones. ...³⁴ **But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants.**

- b. It is confession of sin from a sincere, humble heart that opens up the way to receive God's grace of forgiveness of guilt and cleansing of the heart.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- (1) David knew the futility and misery of deceitfully hiding his sin before God. He also experienced God's blessing of justification after sincerely confessing his sin to the Lord.

Psalm 32:1 *A Psalm of David. A Maskil.* **How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!**² **How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!**³ When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away *as* with the fever heat of summer. Selah.⁵ **I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; and You forgave the guilt of my sin.**

- (2) In our American legal system, guilty criminals often attempt to escape punishment by hiding their sin, by deceitfully casting doubt on their guilt and on their accusers. But before the Lord, the righteous judge, the only way we will escape His punishment is to become “self-accusers,” to accuse ourselves of sin and not deceitfully attempt to hide, minimize, excuse, redefine our sin. Christ spoke through His apostle Paul to sinning members of the Corinthian church, encouraging them to become self-accusers who repent so as to avoid His punishment.

1 Corinthians 11:27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.²⁸ But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.²⁹ For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.³⁰ **For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.**³¹ **But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.**

4. Ingredient #4 - Shame of sin

- a. When the Israelite priest Ezra learned that his people, returned from captivity due to their sin, were intermarrying with the pagan peoples of the land, he felt profound shame before the Lord as he confessed Israel's repeated sins and called the people to repentance. It is this same humiliation and shame over sin that Jesus is encouraging in His parable of the Pharisee and tax collector.

Ezra 9:5 But at the evening offering I arose from **my humiliation**, even with my garment and my robe torn, and I fell on my knees and stretched out my hands to the LORD my God;⁶ and I said, "**O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You**, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens.

Luke 18:13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, **was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven**, but was beating his breast, **saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'**¹⁴ **"I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other;**

- b. Christians must be careful not to take pride in their past sin and glory in what was their shame.

Philippians 3:18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ,¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and **whose glory is in their shame**, who set their minds on earthly things.

- (1) The world mocks us, ridicules us for being righteous, for being pure in speech, sexuality, business, romantic and social relationships, etc. Some of us whom God has mercifully delivered from a pagan lifestyle can be tempted to respond in pride to such charges, boasting that we know all about the ways of the world, glorying in past sins over which true repentance feels shame.

Romans 6:21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from **the things of which you are now ashamed**? For the outcome of those things is death.

- (2) The Lord likens our sin before Him to the shame of “nakedness.” We are not to boast in our nakedness, but to come to Christ, who bore our shame, naked on the cross, that we who are zealous to repent might be clothed in His righteousness! He invites the repentant to be so clothed.

Revelation 3:17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and **you do not know that you are** wretched and miserable and poor and blind and **naked**,¹⁸ I advise you to **buy from Me ... white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed**; ...¹⁹ 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; **therefore be zealous and repent**.

5. Ingredient #5 - Hatred of sin

- a. A repentant heart hates sin in all of its forms and varieties. It does not hate only selective sins.

Psalms 119:104 From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore **I hate every false way**.

- (1) It hates sin first because sin dishonors God, despises God, enrages God, grieves God, wearies God, is hostile toward God, opposes the Lord and His Christ.

Romans 2:23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, **do you dishonor God**?

- (2) A repentant heart hates sin second, because sin degrades, poisons, devalues, and destroys people, and opposes the redemptive work of Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:11 For through your knowledge **he who is weak is ruined**, the brother for whose sake Christ died.¹² And so, **by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.**

b. And so we hate sin, first in ourselves, but also in others.

Ezekiel 36:27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. ...³¹ "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and **you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.**

Jude 1:23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, **hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.**

Revelation 2:6 "Yet this you do have, that **you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

6. Ingredient #6 - Turning from sin to the Lord

a. For repentance to be complete, to be acceptable to Christ, we must forsake our sinning and turn to obeying Christ from the heart by faith. Until we let go of our sin and submit to Christ as Lord we have not repented.

Luke 3:7 So he *began* saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, **who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?**⁸ "Therefore **bear fruits in keeping with repentance,**

Isaiah 55:7 **Let the wicked forsake his way** and the unrighteous man **his thoughts**; and **let him return to the LORD**, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

b. Repentance must be sincere, meaning wholeheartedly turning from every sin and burning our bridges back to sin. Half-hearted repentance is the practice of deception.

Jeremiah 3:10 "Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister **Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception,**" declares the LORD.

Matthew 18:9 "**If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you.** It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell.

1 Kings 8:47 **if they take thought** in the land where they have been taken captive, and **repent** and make supplication to You in the land of those who have taken them captive, **saying, 'We have sinned** and have committed iniquity, we

have acted wickedly';⁴⁸ **if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul ...**⁴⁹ **then hear their prayer** and their supplication in heaven Your dwelling place, and maintain their cause,⁵⁰ **and forgive Your people who have sinned against You**

III. Luke 13:6-9 God's patience with sinners gives us opportunity to repent.

Luke 13:6 And He *began* telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any."⁷ "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, **for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down!** Why does it even use up the ground?'"⁸ "And he answered and said to him, '**Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;**⁹ **and if it bears fruit next year, *fine*; but if not, cut it down.**'"

- A. God's continued blessing and withholding of judgment should not be misinterpreted as an indication of His approval and favor.

Psalms 50:21 "These things you have done and I kept silence; **You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state *the case* in order before your eyes.**

Romans 2:3 But **do you suppose this**, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, **that you will escape the judgment of God?**⁴ Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, **not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?**⁵ But because of your stubbornness and **unrepentant heart** you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

- B. The Scriptures speak of repentance as a first act of turning from sin and unbelief accompanying conversion, and also as a repeated act of believers when they become entangled by sin. Those who receive from Christ the gift of eternal salvation are those who repent at the beginning of their new life in Christ, and who by faith in Christ then practice repentance as a way of life.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**

Romans 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but **if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**

Conclusion: Life is short, with inevitable hardship and tragedy, ending in mortal death. But far more tragic is the person who while still alive will never turn from sin to Christ. So turn from sinning and come to the Christ Who came to us.

Luke 13:3 ... **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**

Psalm 32:10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, **but he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him.**