

Value of Repentance



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Repentance is a valuable truth that is available any time. Repentance means confessing and forsaking anything, or any attitude, that is contrary to God's Word. Being in the will of God is the only safe place today and for eternity. It is the only place of real protection, and the only place where we can receive all the benefits of that great work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and of His resurrection life.

The apostle told church members how to be protected; and how illness and even death could be avoided. ¹ Corinthians 11:31 *"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."* When we are judged by the Lord, because we have neglected to judge ourselves, then—¹ Corinthians 11:32, *"chastisement [discipline] follows, to save us from being condemned along with the world."*

Judging ourselves means repenting, confessing, and forsaking our sins. Satan can cause trouble if we do not repent of known sins. ^{Proverbs 28:13} *"He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."* It is a divine privilege to be kept free from trouble and protected from problems—which is the result of a true repentance—something anyone can do at any time.

The devil is always trying to get us into an unscriptural position, and if he does—through our not knowing, or because of unbelief, or for some other reason—he can cause trouble for us. We must be ready to admit, and willing to forsake, any wrong attitude at the beginning of

the error—which will protect us from the trouble Satan had planned.

We must grow spiritually and avoid unscriptural attitudes the devil wants to place in us. ^{Hebrews 6:1} *"Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ [the basics of Christianity] and go on to maturity [perfection], not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God."* We should not have to keep going over basic principles of truth.

The value of repentance is great, because it not only keeps us out of trouble, but protects us from problems in the first place. There has never been a time when we need God's protection more than we do today. Divine protection is the result of true repentance.

Jesus referred to those who had lost their lives, and then asked a question ^{Luke 13:2-3}, *"Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no!"* It did not happen to them because they were worse sinners, because you are all sinners until a true repentance is made, He meant. He added, *"Unless you repent, you too will all perish,"*—maybe not by a building falling on them, but by an illness, or an accident.

Repentance enables God to protect us from being injured. There are so many cars on the road today and with so many being distracted while operating vehicles, tragic incidents are happening at an alarming rate. We should never leave our home, or drive a vehicle, without first asking God to protect us ^{Psalms 121:8} *"The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."*

Every promise given to Israel is in full force for us today—if we will follow God's plan of repentance and faith in the Atonement

of His Son. Early on Jesus said ^{Matthew 3:2} *"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;"* which means a true repentance that will ^{Matthew 3:8} *"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance."* ^{Matthew 3:8} *"Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God."*

If we have truly repented, we can expect to receive divine healing. Jesus said at Nazareth, ^{Luke 4:18}, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed."*

The gospel of Christ is the Truth from the Word. Those who are brokenhearted are those who have truly repented. Liberty to the captives is freedom from the devil's influence, and healing from physical oppression. The preaching of John the Baptist was a call for repentance and remission of sins—this opened the way for Jesus to heal people who had truly repented of their sins.

Wherever Satan has made trouble, there is always a spiritual cause. It reads ^{Proverbs 26:2} *"A curse without cause shall not alight."* When the cause is revealed, repentance is next, so the deliverance can be given. No matter how serious the problem, or how unpleasant the situation, a true repentance will place us where God can deliver us. ^{Matthew 12:31} *"Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men"*—if they are willing to repent, of course.

Another example of repentance is Manasseh. When he took the throne of Judah, he introduced idol worship—^{2 Kings 21:3} *"For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of*

heaven and served them.” 7 “He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made,” in the house of the Lord.

2 Kings 21:11-12 “Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle.’ Manasseh 2 Kings 24:4 “filled Jerusalem with innocent blood.”

It was bad enough to be wicked himself, but he corrupted an entire nation, and murdered a multitude of innocent people. How anyone could be *that* possessed of the Devil is difficult to explain, but Manasseh was that evil. Because of these sins, God allowed the King of Assyria to capture him—who bound him in irons, and threw him into prison.

Manasseh, however, repented, confessed his sins, and humbled himself before God. The result of his repentance was, being released from the prison; then being restored to his throne in Judah; and finally enjoying peace and prosperity. *That* is a real manifestation of God’s love and mercy; and how willing God is to help anyone who truly repents.

The value of repentance is that it will bring divine wisdom and perfect protection, if those who have sinned will confess and forsake them. Jonah proclaimed Jonah 3:4 “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.” It was a wicked city, so God had to proclaim a dire warning. If they did not repent, the prediction would be fulfilled.

When he heard the warning, the King of Nineveh believed God’s Word, and came down from his throne. He clothed himself in sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Job had that same re-

pentant attitude and said Job 42:5-6 “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

The king said that everyone should repent, fast, and pray for God’s mercy. Jonah 3:8-9 “Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?”

That repentance saved them from sure destruction, because Jonah 3:10 “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.”

Jesus referred to this when He said Matthew 12:41 “The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here”—meaning, of course, Himself. As God in the flesh, He was infinitely greater than Jonah or anyone else. If a heathen king of a wicked city could repent and be saved, then anyone could repent and be saved.

If we have truly repented, confessed and forsaken our sins, we can have confidence that God will answer our prayers. We will be able to *act in faith* on the promise of His Word, and be sure of receiving all that we need. The *value* of repentance cannot be described in words. The *result* of repentance is an inspiration of faith that enables us to trust God, and to receive the benefits of His presence and power.

1 John 3:20-21 “If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart.” If our own heart condemns us, how much more would God condemn us? We would not be able to act in faith, if there are things in our life to make right. 21-22

But “if our heart condemn us not”—as the result of a true repentance—“then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”

When God told Jonah to warn Nineveh of their need to repent, or the city would be destroyed, he listened to the devil—who convinced him that he would be labeled a false prophet—so he fled to Tarshish instead of going to Nineveh. A “mighty tempest” threatened the lives of everyone on board, so they Jonah 1:7 “cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us.”

Jonah admitted that he was the cause of the trouble. Jonah 1:12 “And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.” Even though it was an act of suicide, God’s mercy caused a 17 “great fish to swallow up Jonah,” which gave him another chance to repent.

On the third day of that predicament, the Holy Spirit inspired Jonah to repent. Jonah 2:8 “They that observe lying vanities [regard worthless idols] forsake their own mercy.” They that listen to the Devil, forsake the mercy of God, He meant. But Jonah said Jonah 2:9 “I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.”

Jonah had surrendered his life to God before, but he did not live up to it—he forsook the mercy God wanted to show him. Now, inside that fish, he decides never to listen to the Devil again, but always listen to God. *That* is real repentance—and a repentance like that, will deliver anyone out of any trouble they are in—anytime; anywhere!



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