

REPENT
AND
BELIEVE

The
Good
News

OUR FOCUS

To lead people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the reason and the purpose behind everything we do. Therefore, we genuinely believe that Jesus is worth following. Because of that, we want to see you get connected to what God is doing through Christ's Church.

Here at Christ's Church, we focus on leading people to be fully devoted followers who will lead others to become fully devoted followers. As disciples, we are all learning to submit every aspect of our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Jesus wants to work in every area of your life, but we know it can be hard to let Jesus have control. Because of that, we want to partner with you and help you grow in your faith.

A fully devoted follower of Jesus is growing in the three rhythms of discipleship—*pursuing God, connecting with disciples, and unleashing impact on the world around them.*



JESUS PREACHED REPENTANCE

Jesus started his public ministry with the message, "the time has come...the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news! (Mark 1:15)".

Those are the first words Jesus taught and proclaimed as he walked this earth. Why is that important? Because it gives us insight into why Jesus came and what he taught when he was here 2,000 years ago.

Jesus' ministry on earth was focused on establishing the Kingdom of God. He was focused on calling people to embrace and live in that Kingdom. But what was required to enter into the community of God? According to Mark 1:15, the answer is twofold—Repent and Believe.

This study aims to look at what that means. What did Jesus mean when he called people to repent, and what was the good news that he wanted them to believe?

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE WORD—REPENTANCE

In the Bible, repentance can be defined in a couple of different ways. The Hebrew equivalents for repentance can be translated as "to turn around and go in the opposite direction." The Greek words for repentance can be translated as "to radically change one's thinking" (Lexham Bible Dictionary).

Repent is a verb. It implies action, not passiveness. Jesus' call for repentance demanded a response from his hearers. There was no middle ground regarding Jesus' message of repentance. He was calling people to action—to embrace God and His purpose on earth as revealed through the life of Jesus.

WHAT DID JESUS CALL PEOPLE TO REPENT FROM?

TURN FROM SIN

Read Luke 5:27-31

- *In response to the Pharisee's complaints, what does Jesus reveal about the motive behind his ministry? To whom is he focused?*

The first and foremost thing that Jesus calls people to repent from is sin. It is what defines humanity. Jesus came to call *sinners* to repentance. Sin has affected every aspect of the world and humanity.

Read Genesis 2:4-3:24

- *What commands did God give Adam and Eve?*
- *How did Satan deceive Adam and Eve? What temptations did Eve face in verse 6?*
- *What were the consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience?*

Read Romans 3:23

- *Who is guilty of sin?*

We all have sin in our life. We have tried to find satisfaction, wisdom, and autonomy apart from God. He has given us a way to live within His Presence, and we rebelled against His reign. Simply put, we all have disobeyed His commands. We have sinned against a good and gracious God. But God made a promise that there would be a descendant of Eve that would come to deliver us from the dominion and penalty of sin (Genesis 3:15).

TURN FROM DEATH

Read Romans 5:12 and Romans 6:23

- *Death is a result of what?*

Read Ephesians 2:1-4

- *How do these verses describe our state of being because of sin?*

If humanity's identity apart from God is *sinner*, then humanity's inevitable outcome is death. It is the penalty or payment due for our sinfulness.

In the Old Testament, God gave the Israelites a way to deal appropriately with their sin. They could offer animal sacrifices to be cleansed and make atonement for their sins. However, it didn't fully remove the penalty, power, or presence of sin from their life. It only pushed it back until the next time they sinned and had to offer another animal sacrifice. The whole story of the Old Testament showed how pervasive sin was. No matter how many rules or regulations God gave the Israelites, they still couldn't keep His commands. They failed every time. Sin ran deeper in humanity than just outward behavior modification. Sin started in the hearts of humanity and was expressed in people's sinful actions.

TURN FROM IDOLATRY

The issue with sin is that humanity desires anything else instead of God. Even Adam and Eve in the Garden desired something that God had said not to eat. The forbidden fruit became more desirable to them than obeying God's command. The rest of the Old Testament gives testimony to humanity's idolatry.

Repeatedly, God provided and blessed the Israelites, but they still chose to worship and align their lives with false gods. Even after being freed from slavery in Egypt by the power of God (Exodus 1-

14), the Israelites made and worshipped a golden calf a few months later (Exodus 32).

Idolatry isn't just worshipping statues of false gods made from stone, wood, gold, or silver. It is worshipping anything as God that isn't God. Today, our hearts are still led astray, and we worship other things besides God.

Read Romans 1:18-25

- *What did humans worship instead of the Creator God?*
- *Even today, how does this passage resemble the desires of humanity?*

TURN FROM DARKNESS

Read John 12:44-50

- *In what ways have you experienced the power of darkness in your life? In what ways do you need the light of Jesus to shine through the darkness?*

Because of sin, humanity lives in darkness. Like Eve in the garden, we pursue anything and everything that will satisfy us in the moment.

In the following verses, how does sin dominate over us? How do these behaviors keep us in the darkness of sin?

- *Galatians 5:19-21*
- *Colossians 3:5-9*
- *Titus 3:3*
- *1 Peter 4:3*

TURN FROM UNBELIEF

Romans 1:25 says, "they exchanged the truth about God for a lie." At the core of sin is Satan's lie about who God is or what He does. Satan is the one who deceives us and tempts us to turn away from God. We don't trust that God is good or can provide for us. We don't trust that God can satisfy our desires. We don't trust that God is worthy to be worshipped. The lies from Satan are endless, but they still take root in our hearts. They lead us away from God and to the things of this world.

WHAT DID JESUS CALL PEOPLE TO REPENT TO?

TURN TO BELIEF

So far, sin has painted a very bleak reality for us. Humanity is held captive to our sins. We are slaves to sin with no ability to break the bondage. That was until Jesus came and broke the power of sin over us.

The good news is that Jesus called people to repent from their unbelief and turn to belief in Him as the Savior of the world.

Read John 3:16-18

- *Who are we called to believe in?*

TURN TO THE LIGHT

Humanity not only chooses sin over God, but we also typically want to keep it concealed. We tend to want to stay in darkness more than we want the light to expose our sins. But Jesus called people to repent from the dark and turn to His Light.

If you have been in a dark room for a long time and the lights suddenly turn on, you know how powerful light can be. At first, it can be abrupt and disorienting, but eventually, you adjust to light and can see again. Jesus called people to the powerfulness of His light so that they could truly see.

The good news is that Jesus is the light of the world. He not only exposed the darkness in our lives and the world, but He conquered it. In the light of Jesus, there is life and freedom.

Read John 3:16-21 and John 8:12

- *How does the light of Jesus lead to life?*

In the following verses, how does Jesus rescue us from our former life of darkness? How does believing and following Jesus change our lives?

- *Galatians 5:13-26*
- *Colossians 3:1-11*
- *Titus 2:11-3:8*
- *1 Peter 3:13-4:5*

TURN TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In Mark 1:15, Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of God had come near! The good news is that Jesus established the Kingdom of God through his life, death, and resurrection. Now to be clear, it won't be fully established until Jesus' second coming, when he will completely remove the presence of sin from the world. But for now, Jesus has removed the penalty and power of sin for those who believe in Him!

Jesus calls people to turn their allegiance from false gods (idolatry) and live in the Kingdom of God under His authority.

Read Colossians 1:9-14

- *What is now true about us for those who live in the Kingdom of God? What changes in the lives of those who believe in Jesus?*

TURN TO LIFE

Jesus came to give us a life free from the punishment of sin. The good news is that those in Jesus are no longer dead in their sin but alive in Him! Yes, our current physical bodies may still die before Jesus returns again, but we will join in the resurrection at that time. Our earthly bodies will be traded for an imperishable body in the glory of Jesus Christ. Jesus called people to repent from death and turn to the life found in Him.

In what ways do the following verses speak about our life in Jesus?

- *Ephesians 2:1-10*
- *Romans 6:22-23*
- *1 Corinthians 15*

TURN TO GOD

So far, we have seen how Jesus has called people to turn from unbelief to belief in him, from the darkness to the light, from idolatry to the Kingdom of God, and from death to life.

Ultimately, Jesus called people to repent from their sins and return to God. He is the ultimate reason we turn from our sins and former lives. It is because of God's goodness that we follow him.

God knew the only way to deal with our sin truly was to defeat it. So, God sent himself to earth in the form of a baby (Luke 2). Jesus is God in human flesh. Jesus grew up and lived a perfect life. Even though he was without sin, he still paid the price for our sins. He was crucified on a cross for the sins of humanity (Luke 22-23). He willingly sacrificed himself so his blood would atone for our sins through his death.

But Jesus didn't stay dead. Three days later, he rose from the dead. His resurrection proved his power over sin and death (Luke 24). Jesus triumphed over sin and removed the barrier that sin had caused between God and humanity. Because of Jesus, we can enter a personal relationship with God.

In Jesus, we receive mercy because we receive life instead of death for our sins. Jesus paid that price for us and forgave us of our sins.

In Jesus, we receive grace because although we didn't deserve his love, he still sacrificed himself for us.

In Jesus, we have been freed from the bondage of sin in our lives. We are no longer dead in our sin but a new creation alive in Jesus.

How do the following verses show us the good news of what Jesus did for the world?

- *Romans 3:21-26*
- *Romans 5:1-11*
- *Romans 8*
- *2 Corinthians 5:16-21*
- *John 8:36*

Don't miss this truth, though; God sent Jesus so we could enter into His Presence and have a close relationship with Him! That is why Jesus came! The gifts of grace, mercy, and forgiveness are just that-gifts. They are all God-given gifts to show us His love for us. They point us to God. He is the goal of our lives and following Jesus.

NEXT STEPS

Jesus' call for repentance demanded a response from his hearers. There was no middle ground regarding Jesus' message of repentance. Repent is a verb. It implies action, not passiveness. He was calling people to act—to embrace God and His purpose on earth as revealed through the life of Jesus.

SURRENDER AND CONFESS

Read Romans 10:9-10

- *Who are we called to believe in?*
- *What are we called to confess with our mouth?*

Read 1 John 1:5-10

- *Why is confessing our sins vital for repentance?*
- *What sins do you need to confess? Write out anything you need to confess in the space below.*

REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED

The first time the good news (gospel) of Jesus is publicly communicated is recorded in Acts 2:36-41. Go ahead and read it.

- *According to the text, what was the response of the crowd?*
- *What does cut to heart mean? In what ways have you experienced conviction from the Holy Spirit?*
- *What did Peter tell them to do when the people were ready to respond to the conviction? (v.38)*

We want you to experience a completely new life because of Jesus—a life that is free from the guilt and shame of your sin. A life focused on God's goodness and his love for us.

It starts with surrendering your current life. That is why baptism is a cool picture of Jesus in our life. Baptism is when you, yourself, decide to submit your life to Jesus and accept a new life from him. As you are lowered under the water, you symbolize your current life is dying. Then, as you rise back out of the water, you symbolize your new life being made alive with Jesus.

We understand that baptism is a big step for people to take! However, you may still have questions to work through. God may still be revealing your need for him, and you may not be quite ready to repent and turn to Him. If that is you, then consider going through our baptism booklet. In it, you will find scriptures that help you understand why and when people get baptized.

REPENTANCE AS A LIFESTYLE

Whether you have been baptized before or not, every Christian needs to be reminded of the power found in a new life in Jesus. When a person surrenders to Jesus and confesses their sins, Jesus' strength and power can be seen in their life.

There is no area of your life that Jesus doesn't want to transform. That can be a scary thought, but it is worth it. Following Jesus is a life-long process because it takes time for God to teach us to trust Him in every single part of our lives. Turning away from our sinful actions and desires is not just a one-time thing; repentance and turning to Jesus happens daily. Jesus didn't just come to earth to save us from sin so we could live happy lives doing whatever we wanted.

When Jesus saved us from our sins, he earned the right to be the Lord of our lives.

Read Mark 8:34-38

- *What does it mean for you to take up your cross?*

The paradox of following Jesus is that by losing our life, we will find it. By surrendering our life and dying to ourselves, we find life in Jesus. Repentance isn't just a one-time thing. It becomes a lifestyle of following Jesus.

Following Jesus is a relationship with him where you regularly practice the rhythms of surrendering to Jesus, confessing your sins, realigning your life to God, increasing your worship, and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you in His mission.

BEING A "CHRISTIAN"

"Christian" is used for those who have aligned themselves with Jesus Christ. There is an identification with Jesus. That means if you call yourself a "Christian," then you need to look like Christ. You carry on his ministry even if it leads to suffering and death.

Read Matthew 28:16-20

- *What does Jesus tell us, as his followers, to do?*

The last command that Jesus gave His disciples before ascending into heaven was to make disciples. He wanted His followers to teach others what it looked like to be entirely devoted to Him. The command to make disciples applies to all Christians of all ages. Jesus wants to work in our heart so that we start seeing other people as worthy of the same things God has given to us. We are called to teach people what it looks like to be fully devoted to Jesus so that the good news of Jesus Christ can also transform them.

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP OF FAITH



Stop by the Growth Track desk after service to talk to a team member about your next step.

or visit
christchurch.com/growth-track