

WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER PENTECOST 04 THE RESPONSE TO PENTECOST 01 REPENT STUDY GUIDE

Read Acts 2.36. The message of Pentecost, as we found out last week, was Jesus. Peter preached Jesus to the people. You have to realize that the filling of the Spirit makes you talk about Jesus to people, it leads to you glorifying Jesus. William Booth said that truly Spirit-filled people do not speak more about the Spirit, they speak more about Jesus.

Read John 16.14. The purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was to exalt and glorify and lift up Jesus! He died, He rose again, He bore our sin. As Peter finishes his sermon on Jesus, then something happens next.

This is important to us as Christians. We can hear all the sermons in the world, but what happens when we hear a sermon? What is the purpose of preaching? What should happen when someone who is filled with the Spirit preaches? What is our response to the message of Jesus?

Read Acts 2.37. The people who heard Peter's sermon on Jesus wanted to make a response, but they did not know what response to make. These are both ok – wanting to respond and not knowing how to respond.

I stole a Bible from a Presbyterian church at the age of 15, and I started reading Matthew and Mark. I started falling in love with Jesus, he was cool, he said the right thing all the time, he stood up to religious bullies, he helped people, he loved different people, he didn't care what people thought of him – and when you are 15 all you care about is what people think of you – and I just admired him so much. He knew things He shouldn't be able to know, he could heal sick people. The more I read the more I was enamoured by HIM and who HE WAS. I had two questions:

1. Is it true? Can it possibly be true? Could something this wonderful, someone this amazing be real?
2. What do I do if it is real? How do I relate to Jesus? I was being cut to the heart by the message of PENTECOST and I was like these people "What shall I do?" – when we realize who Jesus is – LORD AND CHRIST, when we realize what HE DID – took our place – our substitute, and when we realize where HE IS – at our right hand. WHAT DO I DO? What is the response to PENTECOST?

Thankfully for me, and for all of us, Peter gave us a response. Read Acts 2.38-40. We see that there are four responses to the message of Jesus:

1. REPENT
2. BE BAPTIZED
3. RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
4. BE SAVED FROM THIS PERVERSE GENERATION

Today we will look at the first of these, repentance. The word "repent" comes from the Greek word "metanoia", meta means to make a change or to lift to a higher level, and noia means your mind. When we combine these, repentance means to change your mind or lift your thinking to a higher level.

Your response to JESUS CHRIST SHOULD ALWAYS BE A CHANGE OF THE WAY YOU THINK!

The best definition of repentance is to change your mind about something. It might be that you stop thinking “Hey, it’s ok to live for myself and do whatever I want” and start thinking “I am going to live to please Jesus”. That is changing your mind. Now, there either could be emotion in that change of mind, or not, that is not actually relevant, what is repentance is that you change your thinking.

We must start by grasping that repentance is not an emotion. It is not a feeling. Many times, preachers will try and work people up into an emotional state and then call them to repent, either to become a Christian or to become a better Christian. But because repentance does not flow from emotions then that kind of meeting leads to someone falling back from their repentance or commitment, the emotion runs out and they feel let down and they have no substance to their changes or commitment. Repentance does not flow from the emotions, but from the will. We need to reach people’s wills and expect people to change their will, to see permanent commitment from people.

There are people in the church who are not born again, they have never turned from dead works. They are going to church, but they are not part of the church because they have never repented from dead works. They have never changed at a volitional level; they have never made a decision. Others are born again, they have believed in Christ, but they have never let that faith infect their will, so their joy is short-lived, and their Christian walk is dysfunctional.

Repentance is a change of mind, but it is not a change of mind that does not lead to results. Repentance is a change of mind that ends up with a change of direction. You cannot say you have changed your mind about a topic, but you are still behaving the same way. That is not repentance, repentance brings results. Repentance is not “I change my mind about going to share my faith with this person or giving this gift” and then not doing something. The Hebrew word for repentance means to change path to a path going the other way. You have been thinking without God and so you turn around and now think with God in your thoughts, that is absolutely repentance.

Read Hebrews 6.1. It tells us we need to repent from dead works. Most people will define dead works as works that lead to death, but I am not sure that is the best understanding of this phrase. Dead works can easily be good works that are not energised and inspired by the Spirit of God. Any work we do to please God has obscured the cross for us and do is a dead work. Anything not of faith is sin (Romans 14.23) and often we – as Christians or non-Christians – are doing things to try and impress God, impress other people, prove something to ourselves, or whatever. That is a dead work, you cannot please God by works, you can only please Him with faith. You cannot access the presence of God by works, only by His grace. You cannot work your way to heaven, it is a gift.

A person may be a very good church goer, a very good giver, said all the prayers in the book, but if none of it was done in faith, it was a dead work. It is something we need to turn from. Only faith in God and His Word gives life to our faith and our behaviour and our works.

There is no Bible verse that says “believe and repent”, but Mark 1.15 says to “repent and believe”. If you are struggling to believe God in a particular issue, often the reason is that we need to repent and change our thinking on that issue. There is a reason that repentance is the first response to Jesus – if that foundation of repentance is not in place, everything else ends up wobbly.

As a pastor, I have found that around half of Christian problems are caused by poor thinking on an area, and it is because of a lack of repentance, a lack of changing how you think about a particular issue. People like to hold onto their own thoughts and not embrace God's thoughts. This is when GRACE goes beyond the BIBLE – if you think GRACE means you no longer have to repent, repentance is just for the OLD Testament, just for the JEWS – you have deviated from sound doctrine!

This is why repentance is the first basic thing we need to look at. **BECAUSE UNLESS YOU START CHANGING THE WAY YOU THINK – NOTHING IN YOUR LIFE WILL CHANGE!**

If you did not know the importance of repentance, you would not know to change your limited, small, self-centred thoughts and change them into big, Godly, life-changing thoughts.

But most Christian problems are caused because people do not repent, they do not change their mind.

- They have never come to the place where they say “what I think I will not hold tightly” and “what Jesus thinks I will think”. People have not surrendered to the truth that Jesus is Lord, Jesus' thoughts are the right thoughts, and His will is the best thing for anyone. Because of this, people still make their decisions based on “well, if I do this, will it be best for me” rather than “will this bring glory to Jesus”. So, we have a lot of Christians, sadly a lot of young Christians, but certainly not limited to young people, who are basically double minded. A double minded man is unstable (James 1.8) because their foundation is not solid. If the foundation is not solid, if the basic things are not in place, then your building is not going to be stable. You need to decide that you want to live a life of repenting – you will change your mind whenever you find that your mind and Jesus' mind do not think the same.

Unstable people change their mind on Sunday in church, and then change it back Monday, then change it again on Tuesday, then so on and so on. They are actually living in the worst of both worlds – and they need to truly decide to live the repentant life – I am going to think what God thinks.

The Parable of Repentance

There is a parable that illustrates repentance more than any other parable. It is the parable of the Prodigal Son. This is found in Luke 15.11-32.

You all know the story, the young man got his inheritance early, squandered it, lived selfishly, and then a famine came and the only job available was feeding the pigs. So, the son is broke, hungry, dirty, stinky, and things of eating the pig food, and then something happened. Read Luke 15.17.

This is what I mean when I talk about repentance, it is the moment you come to yourself, and start to see what the truth is. You have to see God the way He actually is – a good Father, and you have to see yourself the way you actually are – a messed-up pig farmer. Read Luke 15.17-20.

Can you see repentance in this passage? He changed his mind. He stopped seeing himself as someone demanding his rights and his inheritance and his ministry and his this and that, and started to realize he was being selfish, ignoring his family, and walking in

rebellion to God's plan. Therefore so many people – so many Christians – never walk in their destiny, they never change their mind about anything. They hold things very tightly.

But this man did not just make a change of mind, he decides to walk back home. That is repentance – deciding and carrying it out. Repentance means going back to the person you offended. Repentance means, in the larger picture, coming back to the God who loves you and say “God, I have not been able to make it on my own. When I lean on my own understanding, I messed it right up, I can’t get it right, but I keep trying. Will you please receive me and show me how to live with you, I cannot live without You and Your love and Your wisdom”?

Now, if you mess up against God and you abandon God, and you come back, one think that always happens is that we start to doubt that God will take us back. This young man had a speech prepared when he saw his father, “make me a hired servant”. But when he made his way back, he found out His Father was waiting for Him. That is such a powerful image of God, when we begin to turn to Him, He is waiting for us, He is hoping for the best, expecting the best, and it is awesome. The father saw him a long way off and ran to meet him. The father kissed him, and he never let his son get through his speech.

The son wanted to work for his blessings, but that is another thought we need to repent of. God does not want us to work for our blessings, God wants us to have the best robe, the ring on our hand, the sandals on our feet and eating fatted calf.

This is such a powerful picture not just of genuine repentance, but a picture of God's eternal and consistent response to repentance. And it all started when the prodigal son came to himself. He looked at his thoughts – “I want my inheritance, I can do it better on my own, life is better without a family, selfish pleasures can be bought”. And he realized that those thoughts mess up your life. Those thoughts lead you somewhere, and you want to end up somewhere better you need to change your thoughts. When you change your thoughts, you start to head back to your Father, and you find that God is already waiting and always willing to show love and grace to us. That is true repentance.

There is also sadly a false repentance that never affects your walk. It could be described as remorse. Judas regretted what he did to Jesus, but it never changed his walk:

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, saying “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood” And they said “What is that to us? You see to it!” Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself (Matt. 27.3-5)

Judas had remorse, but he did not repent. He just did not change. You can get so hard hearted that even if you regret and even hate your sin, you do not change. I believe that when God starts approaching you about changing the way you think, it is always a holy moment. If you shrug your shoulders during those moments and go “I don’t really care, I will just keep doing it my way for now”, that is never going to lead to a good place. The most critical moments in our lives are the moments God speaks to us and challenges us to repent and think differently than the way we were before.

Read Romans 2.4. If the goodness of God leads us to change and to repent, then it is despising and ignoring the goodness and grace of God that makes us fail to repent. Another character who suffered great remorse without repenting was Esau. I always look

at Esau carefully as someone who missed his birthright and destiny, as I think there is a bit of Esau in all of us. God freely offers us His goodness and grace and we fail to recognize it, we despise it and we ignore it.

Imagine you are praying about having a ministry of your own – pastoring a church, for example. But you were going about it the wrong way, you are trying to rip apart another church to gain followers, if you were running from conference to conference getting different people to lay hands on you because you think that is the key, if you are being harsh with people and vying for position. So, God starts to speak the Word to you to get you to think His Word and His way. Read Luke 16:11-12.

To be released into ministry, you have to start giving generously, and start serving someone who is already in ministry. That is non-negotiable, that is the thoughts of God. If God starts laying that on someone's heart but they reject it and go back to their own way, then they will never be in ministry. Repentance will lead you into your destiny, it will lead you into your riches, lead you into your freedom, your healing. You have to stop thinking your way and thinking His way.

Esau had a destiny, a birthright, a calling. But he rejected God's goodness and grace. Read Hebrews 12:14-16. Esau was not looking carefully! We all must look carefully, as these little foxes can get into all of our minds and cause us to hate the grace of God.

I. A Root of Bitterness

- a. I have found that nearly everything God does in our life He does through people, so satan immediately starts to try and point out a flaw in those people, so we get bitter then we cannot receive from them and then fail to walk in God's grace. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts. We have to choose God's thoughts and receive the people God brings to us and respond to them. There are people who leave churches bitter every day, and they then fail to get to where they need to be.

2. Fornication

- a. This will always take you away from your destiny and your freedom and the good life. It is amazing how the act of fornication is always surrounded by thoughts that justify and "make right" that selfish act of misuse of God's creation. You will never be free from fornication unless you get free from the thoughts surrounding it like a fortress.

3. Profanity

- a. The word profanity here means godless. A person who lets thoughts go through their mind and lead them without ever putting God in those thoughts or considering God once. This is where Esau got into trouble. I cannot see in Scripture where he was involved in fornication, but he did sell his birthright for a bowl of stew. His attitude was the same attitude as fornication – to give up your destiny to please your body. He looked at his destiny and hated it. He despised the grace of God that gave him his calling and swapped it for a bowl of stew.
- b. He had the birthright, he was the elder son. It was purely God's grace that he was firstborn. But he could smell the soup and so gave up his birthright for something that he could sense. He did not trust God to come through for him.

- c. Esau thought “my birthright cannot help me here, I am hungry, I need something I can take right now”. I have seen people make that exact same decision, “I am lonely, and I need someone right now” and they end up with someone who rips their heart apart. They fail to think of their wife and their children and their birthright, they fail to think of anything but their senses. I have seen people offended leave the person who could actually help them, but they want to be in ministry right now and will not wait.
- d. If you despise your birthright, you cannot walk into what God has for you unless you repent and change those thoughts for thoughts about God’s goodness and grace. If you turn you back on the inheritance that you have in Christ for some cheap, temporary, worldly pleasure, you will need to repent and change your thinking and direction to get back.

Read Hebrews 12:17. Esau’s heart had become so cold and his mind so unused to thinking God’s thoughts, that although he regretted losing his inheritance, his thoughts were of regret and his pain and his loss, and he could not replace them with godly thoughts about God’s goodness and grace. He was looking to repent but his heart was so hard, he could not. In this life, the grace of God never gives up on you and there are always second chances as long as your heart beats, but you can mess up your mind so badly that your thoughts are so warped and selfish that you cannot repent. That is a dangerous place to be. That is a very serious thing to say, but I want to make it very clear, and we could not talk fully about repentance without saying this.

Far too little is said about repentance when it is the foundation of the Christian life and the starting point to maturity. You have to build your Christian life on the truth that if you encounter at any point that God’s ways are not your ways, you will change your thoughts and your ways. If you do not live a repented life, you will never have a strong faith or a strong walk with God, it will always be wobbly. You will always be up and down, in one day out the next. You need to lay the foundation stone of repentance. I will turn away from living for me, thinking my thoughts, pleasing me, and doing my own thing. I will turn to God, face God and say, “Here I am, what do you want me to do, and I will do it”.

That is the life you need. Now if you have never made that commitment to God, you need to find time and space to do that. Even if you have, it is never wrong to remind yourself and remind God that you are committed to doing things His way. Let Him show you exactly what those things are, and if you need a softer heart, ask the Lord to show you what thoughts you need to change most urgently.

Repent and Believe

Repent and believe was the message of John the Baptist, and then the message of Jesus, and now it is the message of the CHURCH.

We must repent so that we can encounter Jesus, see HIM AT OUR RIGHT HAND, and then we need to repent so we can continue to walk with Jesus. Every part of our walk with Jesus needs repentance.

Imagine I preached at a healing meeting, and I call people forward for healing. Let us imagine there are some pagans in the meeting, and they have prayed and gone to pagan gods for healing. Before they can believe Jesus is the Healer, they need to change some of their thoughts. They need to stop thinking these pagan gods have power, they need to

think that God has power. Now if I preach well, they will be repenting all throughout the service and changing their thoughts. But it is not harmful to mention these sorts of things specifically and speak to people. Certainly, one on one, it can be the key that unlocks people to receiving by faith in all sorts of different areas.

If you wanted to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues, you would have to repent of the thought or imagination that you have it all already. If you want to receive from a preacher, you will have to repent of the idea that you are so much superior spiritually to them that you cannot listen to them when they speak. We need to talk about this process – and call it by its Biblical name – repentance. Luke 24.46 tells us that we need to preach repentance to all nations. Everyone needs to know they need to change their way of thinking.

Then when the church first started, on the day of Pentecost, the people were convicted by Peter's preaching, and they wanted to know what to do to be saved.

And Peter tells them the answer: Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2.38). We have three of the basics right here – repentance, the water baptism and the Holy Spirit baptism. God does not change the basics, and one of the basics is repentance. The church needs to preach repent. We also need to preach water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism – which we will cover next week I guess!

Paul says in Acts 17.30 that God commands all men everywhere to repent, that is so clear. No one is omitted and there is no place omitted. Repentance is universal, we all need to do it.

Finally, Paul says in Acts 20.21 that his message was "repentance to God and faith to our Lord Jesus Christ". Notice, once again it is repent and believe. Until you change your mind and realize you are a sinner and you run your own life, you will not believe in the Saviour. So, repentance precedes saving faith, and it precedes trusting God for healing, for deliverance, for prosperity. The New Testament is utterly consistent about this – we need to change our thinking. All men everywhere – that includes you and that includes me.

Our proper response to Jesus and the truths about Jesus is first and foremost – repentance.

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WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER PENTECOST 04 THE RESPONSE TO PENTECOST 01
REPENT QUESTIONS

- I. What was the message of Pentecost?
2. What should our response to the message of Pentecost be?
3. What does the word "repentance" mean?
4. What was something you had to change your mind over, to repent about, when it comes to Jesus and the message about Jesus?
5. What are dead works and why do we have to repent from them?
6. Why do we have to repent before we believe?
7. What makes the parable of the prodigal son a great illustration of repentance?
8. What was the father's response to the repentance of his lost son?
9. Judas and Esau had remorse and not repentance. What does that look like and what is the difference?
10. What is it that causes and leads people to repent? (clue: Romans 2.4)
- II. Why is a root of bitterness something we must repent from?
12. Why is fornication something we must repent from?
13. Why is profanity something we must repent from?
14. In Acts 17.30, which group of people should repent?
15. Is there a thought you need to change in your mind right now that you want the group to help you in prayer and support with?
16. What about this message inspired, challenged or encouraged you the most?



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