

Repentance

Acts 17:30

I. Introduction.

A. Important Subject

1. God commands repentance (Acts 17:30)
2. It is a condition of Salvation (Acts 17:30)
3. Jonah (Mt. 12:41), Peter (Acts 3:19), Paul (Acts 17:30), and Jesus (Luke 13:3) all preached on repentance.

B. With these considerations, repentance needs to be preached!

C. Two Main Points

1. What is Repentance?
2. How are People Brought to Repentance?

II. What is Repentance?

A. Many answers typically given

1. Sorrow, regret for wrong doing
2. "Crying" over sin
3. When you make up your mind that someday you're going to turn to God.
4. Simply admitting you've done wrong.
5. "Turn over a new leaf"

B. None of these are "repentance" in the Biblical sense, although they are related.

C. "Repentance" in the NT

1. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of conduct and life.
2. Translated from "metanoia" (used 57 times in the NT), a condition of Salvation
3. Defined: "after-thought, or to 'think afterwards,' in the sense of a change of mind after reflection on one's past life in view of God's word.
4. Hence, "to think afterwards" signifies a change of mind or purpose for the future with respect to past actions and lifestyle.

D. Various passages teach this idea.

1. Repentance as it relates to Sorrow.

- a. 2 Cor. 7:8-10 – "godly sorrow produces repentance"
 - i. verse 9 – "sorrow *led to* repentance"
 - ii. implies there may be sorrow for sin that does NOT lead to repentance; thus, "sorrow alone" is not repentance.
 - iii. Not just any sorrow; it is "godly" sorrow that produces repentance.
 - iv. Verse 10 – "sorrow of the world produces death"
 - v. Two kinds of sorrow
 - a) Sorrow of the world – Judas (Matt. 27:3)
 - b) Godly sorrow – David (2 Sam. 13:12; Ps. 51:1-4)

2. Repentance as it relates to reformation of life.

- a. Acts 3:19 – "Repent therefore, and *turn back*, that your sins may be blotted out" (ESV).
 - i. "turn" = reformation of life, or change of conduct; note: "repent AND turn"
 - ii. Thus, repentance (strictly speaking) is not a reformation of life or "change of conduct"
 - iii. Change of conduct is the outward, visible *result* of repentance.
 - iv. Even though "repentance" and "change of conduct" are not strict synonyms, true repentance has not occurred where there is no change of conduct.

- v. It is like making a distinction between a tree and the fruit that grows on the tree.
 - a) Repentance = the tree
 - b) Change of conduct = the fruit that grows on the tree
- vi. John the Baptist said: "Bring forth fruit in keeping with your repentance" (Mt. 3:8).
- b. Hence, repentance is neither sorrow alone nor a change of conduct alone, but a change of mind that leads to a change of conduct growing out of godly sorrow. The change of conduct is only the outward, visible evidence of a change of heart.

III. How Are People Brought to Repentance?

- A. It is difficult to get people to repent (Mt. 23:27) – "...how often would have I gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you *would not*."
- B. This touches on the question of ability to repent.
 - 1. Some say, we are totally depraved and unable to repent.
 - 2. However, the Bible commands people to repent or perish (Lk. 13:3).
 - 3. If we are unable, then such commands are meaningless.
 - 4. Throughout the Bible, it is assumed that people can repent, and they are commanded to do so as a condition of salvation.
- C. How, then, are they brought to repentance? Ans: Two motivating factors.
 - 1. The judgment of God
 - a. Mt. 3:10
 - b. Lk. 13:3
 - c. Acts 17:30-31
 - d. Prospect of Judgment – 2 Thess. 1:7-9
 - e. Rev. 20:11-12, 15
 - 2. Goodness of God
 - a. Romans 2:4
 - b. Romans 5:8

IV. Summary:

- A. Repentance is a change of mind (change of the will) resulting in a change of conduct and life.
- B. The Goodness of God in the gospel and the prospect of Judgment leads people to repentance.