



NEW BEGINNINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH GOLD COAST, QUEENSLAND

QUALIFIED FOR EVERY BLESSING BECAUSE
OF THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS

REPENTANCE

I was taking a group of people through my book, *This Is The Life* Workbook when someone said, "It's all very well to say that faith in Christ is the only requirement for salvation; but what about repentance? The Bible teaches that unless we repent we cannot be saved."

I responded by asking: "But what is repentance?"

The answer came, "It means we need to stop sinning and clean up those areas of our lives which are displeasing to God."

I said, "If we could do that we wouldn't need a Saviour!"

I think it was Spurgeon who illustrated this by saying that this kind of 'gospel' is like saying to someone who is cold and shivering, "Get warm, then you can come and stand around my fire!"

Repentance means to change our mind

Contrary to popular belief the word 'repent' doesn't mean to stop sinning. It is a translation of the Greek word metanoeo, meaning to perceive afterwards or change one's mind. It is made up of two words: meta = to change; nous = the mind. The idea behind this word is to reconsider, or think differently.

Sin is going our own way instead of God's way, and thinking it is the correct way. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one, to his own way" (Isa.53:6). So the gospel causes us to see that our way is wrong and to renounce it. It calls us to turn and choose God's way instead. For some, the 'way' they need to repent of is a life of self-centred indulgence, for others it is atheism or some other false belief system, for others it is self-righteousness, i.e. the belief that we can save ourselves by trying to reform our behaviour.

But what is God's way?

It is to believe on His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life. There is no salvation outside of him.

The gospel is not a call to us to try to clean up our act so that God will accept us. In fact, it is not about anything we do but is an announcement of what God has already done for us through His Son Jesus Christ.

There are approximately 150 verses in the New Testament which tell us that if we believe (verb) or have faith (noun) in Christ alone we will be saved, justified, have eternal life, etc. No other condition is attached. We cannot contribute to this work by our attempts at behaviour modification. It is by Christ's obedience that we made righteous, not ours (see Rom.5:19).

Salvation is not a joint venture. Jesus alone has fulfilled God's righteousness. God has supplied for us what He demanded from us. There will be no high-fives in heaven! Rather, throughout eternity we will be magnifying His amazing grace, (Eph.1:6,12).



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REPENTANCE – P2

“But if you don’t preach repentance, you will encourage Christians to sin?”

This sounds correct, but is it?

First, let’s remember that to repent means to change our mind. Those who insist that Christians need to keep on repenting are really saying we need to keep changing our mind.

Well, I say, “Make your mind up!”. Is your way the right way, or is Jesus the right way? Believe God’s record and stick with it! Don’t keep repenting, i.e. changing your mind.

Is repentance God’s answer to sin?

Of course, I understand the concern of those who believe that if we drop ‘repentance’ from our vocabulary, Christians will think that it’s OK to live in sin.

First, let me be very clear that any teaching that says sin is OK is false teaching. Sin is what Jesus died to save us from – not only its penalty but also its power.

Grace is not a license to sin; it is the only thing that can empower us against sin. (Rom.5:20; 6:14; Titus 2:11-14).

You will never beat sin by resolving to stop doing it (which is what a misinterpretation of the word ‘repent’ implies). Victory over sin is a divine work. It is Christ who began this good work in us who will also complete it.

God’s answer to sinful flesh is not self-righteous flesh. His answer to the flesh is the Spirit. The Holy Spirit reveals to us our new creation identity as the righteousness of God in Christ. He says, “This is who you are; so now be who you are! Walk worthy of your calling.”

Then He empowers us to put off the deeds which correspond with the old man we were in Adam and to put on the deeds which correspond with the new man we now are in Christ. That’s why the gospel involves a response to each member of the Trinity: repent towards God, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and receive the Holy Spirit.

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