

WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS BUT GOD ONLY? (Mark 2:3-12)

I. What repentance is not.

- A. Conviction is not repentance.
 - 1. No doubt many have been convicted of the fact that they are sinners before God but never repented.
 - 2. Some sinful activity was pointed out to them, admitted by them but no change took place.
 - 3. No doubt Agrippa was convicted of his sin, passing it off by saying, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."
 - 4. Those that brought the lady caught in adultery were convicted but we don't see repentance (John 8:9).
 - 5. All conviction is, is the awareness of our own sinfulness.
 - 6. This awareness alone does not constitute repentance.
- B. Fear is not repentance.
 - 1. When made aware of sin, many are fearful of their state before God.
 - 2. This is a natural reaction when we think of how terrible sin is and how God views sin.
 - 3. Sin means death (James 1:13-15).
 - 4. The Philippian jailor was very fearful when he asked Paul and Silas what he needed to do to be saved, but that fear was not repentance.
 - 5. Felix was trembling when he told Paul he would hear him again at a more convenient time but he did not repent (Acts 24:25).
- C. Sorrow is not repentance.
 - 1. When we are convicted of our sins it often brings sorrow.
 - 2. Sorrow alone is not repentance.
 - 3. There is no greater illustration of this than Judas Iscariot.
 - a. He was extremely sorrowful as he threw that blood money down at the feet of the Jews.
 - b. He was so sorrowful he took his own life.
 - c. Yet we never read he repented.
 - 4. One can cry a river of tears but not repent.
 - 5. There is a vast difference between the sorrow of the world and godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10).
 - a. Sorrow of the world is sorrow over getting caught.
 - b. This does not lead to repentance, but to a way of trying to blame others or change actions so they won't get caught the next time they commit the sin.
- D. While all of these actions are involved in repentance, they alone do not make up what repentance is.

II. A definition of repentance.

- A. The Greek word for repentance is “metanoia.”
 - 1. It comes from a similar sounding Greek word “metanoio.”
 - 2. This word means “to change one’s mind for better, to heartily amend with abhorrence for one’s past sins.”
- B. Repentance is a changing of one’s mind or will that is a result of godly sorrow over one’s sins (2 Corinthians 7:10).
 - 1. This individual has been made aware of his sinful state.
 - 2. Upon this revelation, he has been made to sorrow over what he was done to God and his relationship with God.
 - 3. He then changes his will and thinking to walk in a new direction.
- C. The mind is the source of all our actions (Mark 7:20-23).
- D. The call for repentance is not a call to a change of action but to a change of mind.
- E. As one writer stated, “It’s demand is not so much ‘do new deeds’ as it is ‘act from new principles.’”
- F. Many of us have any surgery we are going to undergo in Birmingham (use illustration of heading to Tupelo and being warned by Tom-Tom but not believing it until seeing signs Tupelo is getting closer).
- G. The greatest illustration is that of those present on the Day of Pentecost when the apostles were preaching.
 - 1. Can you imagine the fear in their minds when it finally hit them that they were the ones who killed the Messiah for whom they had been looking?
 - 2. Can you imagine the sorrow that became theirs when they realized their true relationship with God?
 - 3. We can see their conviction when they cried out “What shall we do?”
 - 4. They were first told to repent and then be baptized.
 - 5. Their baptism would have been useless unless there was a change of will brought about by their fear, sorrow and conviction.
 - 6. Those people changed the way they were living and worshiping.
- H. From these illustrations, I hope we see that repentance is an act of the mind initially, that then brings about a change of course and action.
 - 1. Fear, conviction and sorrow are precursors to repentance.
 - 2. The changed life is the result (Acts 26:19-20).
 - 3. This is what Isaiah said would take place during the gospel age (Isaiah 55:7).

III. **Reasons why man should repent.**

- A. Sorrow over sin should lead to repentance.

1. We need to see sin for what it really is.
2. When we do this, it will bring sorrow to a soft heart.
3. This is what happened to the Corinthians because of the inspired writing of Paul (2 Corinthians 7:9).
4. This is a sorrow that comes from hating the sins we commit.
5. It is a sorrow that comes from knowing we hurt God and His Son by committing them.
6. Sin caused our Lord to be in an agony and to die.
7. Contemplation about where our sin has led us should lead to repentance.

B. Judgment to come should lead us to repentance.

1. This is exactly what Paul told the Athenians (Acts 17:30-31).
 - a. His argument is that God has appointed a day of judgment.
 - b. Jesus is going to be the Judge, certified by the fact God raised Him from the dead.
 - c. Because of this, we ought to repent because we are one day going to answer for what we have done in this body.

2. If one is calm in his sin, it is because of ignorance of God's teaching on the day of judgment.

C. The works of Jesus should lead us to repentance.

1. Jesus said this about the people of His day (Luke 10:13-14; 11:31-32).
2. His kindness and compassion should move us.
3. His great miracles should move us (John 20:30-31).
4. His suffering and death on the cross should move us.

D. The call of Jesus should move us to repentance.

1. Many have said they would like to come to Jesus but felt they were too great of sinners to do so.
 - a. Luke 5:32.
 - b. No one has done so much that they can't be forgiven.
2. This call is for a higher and greater life than now lived.
3. It is a life of service and humility offered by the greatest Servant and most humble being that walked earth.

E. The goodness of God should lead us to repentance.

1. We sometimes sing a song that has the words "God is so good."
2. It should lead us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

3. God wants us to be saved, thus He sent His Son.
4. That act alone should cause us to repent and come to Him.
5. God want us to be saved (2 Peter 3:9).